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Volume 88, No. 12 October 2008

The RING

Boxing: Where Illusion And Reality Collide

Am I the only one who immediately thought of Oscar Diaz when Al Seeger entered the ring to face Yuriorkis Gamboa, two days after Diaz suffered a brain injury in his bout with Delvin Rodriguez?

It wasn't just the brief time span between the two fights, the fact both bouts were televised by ESPN2, or even that Seeger looked like a 5'8", 126-pound stickman. It was, instead, my fear that boxing's twin towers of illusion and reality—the polar opposites between which the sport's high-wire act is suspended—were about to run head-on into each other yet again.

Thankfully, Seeger appears to have successfully survived the wicked right hand that slammed him to the floor so hard in the opening round that the referee didn't even bother to count. But the collision of illusion and reality was still powerful enough to make me wince when Seeger's head ricocheted off the canvas.

Diaz wasn't as fortunate. Although the emergency surgery he underwent will probably save his life, the quality of that life remains uncertain at best.

Going in, the Rodriquez-Diaz match seemed far more competitive than Gamboa-Seeger, providing you didn't probe too deeply. But as Teddy Atlas mentioned at the top of the broadcast, Diaz had taken a nasty beating from Golden Johnson in November 2006, and probably entered the ring as damaged goods.

Yes, Diaz had more going for him than Seeger, but both men had convinced themselves they could win despite all evidence to the contrary. Who knows? Maybe the promoters, matchmakers, ESPN, and even some of the viewing audience were also fooled into thinking the same thing.

Suspension of disbelief is a common occurrence in all walks of life, especially boxing, a realm populated by dreamers and schemers of all stripes. It's not the punches that kill and maim. They're just symptoms of the beautiful sickness we call boxing, the end result of the delusion all fighters harbor—that it won't happen to them.

Boxing would not exist without this maddening but crucial contradiction. It's the same trick of the mind everybody uses to get through the day. How many of us would get into a car or board an airplane if we stopped to think about the undeniable fact that a lot of folks never reach their destinations?

The number of people who watch boxing in the hope of witnessing a tragedy is, I believe, infinitesimally small. Most of us push that unsettling thought to the farthest reaches of our minds. Like the boxers, we need to sublimate the naked truth in order to participate, even in the passive role of observer.

The majority of the time, everything works out okay, which only reinforces the notion that the fantasy is indeed fact. But it's not. Reality is right around the corner, waiting to ambush us as surely as it did Diaz.

None of this is to suggest boxing should be banished. It is, instead, an attempt to look behind the magician's cape and see boxing for what it really is—an elaborate game of chicken, where men race to the edge of disaster in the blind hope the other guy goes off the cliff first.

As spectators, our responsibility is to shoulder a share of the blame when things go horribly wrong. It's the least we can do considering all the pleasure we derive when illusion dodges reality by employing a unique brand of enchantment known as the Sweet Science.

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P.O. Box 529
Mt. Morris, IL 61054-0529
1-800-846-6438
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The Ring (ISSN: 0035-5410), Vol. 88, No. 12 (October 2008), is published monthly, with an additional issue in February, by Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC, 6198 Butler Pike, Suite 200, Blue Bell, PA 19422. Periodicals postage paid at Blue Bell, PA 19422, and additional post offices. Postmaster: Send change of address notices to: The Ring, P.O. Box 529, Mt. Morris, IL 61504-0529. Single copy price $8.95 in U.S. and Canada (£4.95 in U.K.). Subscription price $107.40 in the U.S., $140.40 in Canada and Mexico, $197.40 in remaining countries. Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage. The entire contents of this magazine are copyright ©2008 Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. Publisher is not responsible for the accuracy or content of any advertisements appearing in this magazine, nor the delivery or quality of merchandise or services offered. No endorsement of any such advertisement is intended or implied. Advertisers and agencies assume liability for claims arising from the content of their advertisements. FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRIES AND RATES: (215) 461-0583. U.S. and Canadian distribution by Kable Distribution Services Inc., 14 Wall Street, Suite 4C, New York, NY 10022. International distribution by Worldwide Media Service Inc., 115 East 23rd St., New York, NY 10010, U.K. distribution by Comag Tavistock Rd., West Drayton, Middlesex UB77QE, England.

Printed in U.S.A.

Opening Shot

How Many More Rounds To Go?

Only six minutes have passed in the David Diaz-Manny Pacquiao lightweight fight and already the titleholder looks like he knows what the outcome is going to be. Trainer Jim Strickland gets in Diaz' face here, but it wouldn't be long before that face was almost unrecognizable. Pac-Man scored an easy ninth-round kayo, mercifully forcing a stop to the slaughter (see full coverage on page 30).

PHOTO BY HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

THE BIBLE OF BOXING

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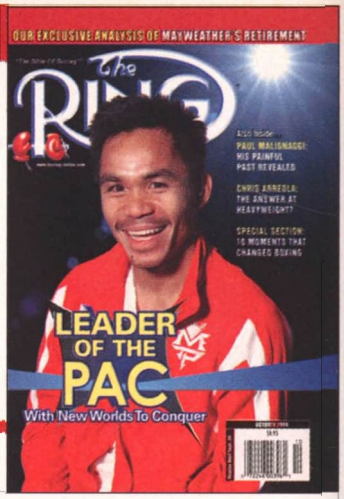

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Cover Design: **Sherry Stravino**

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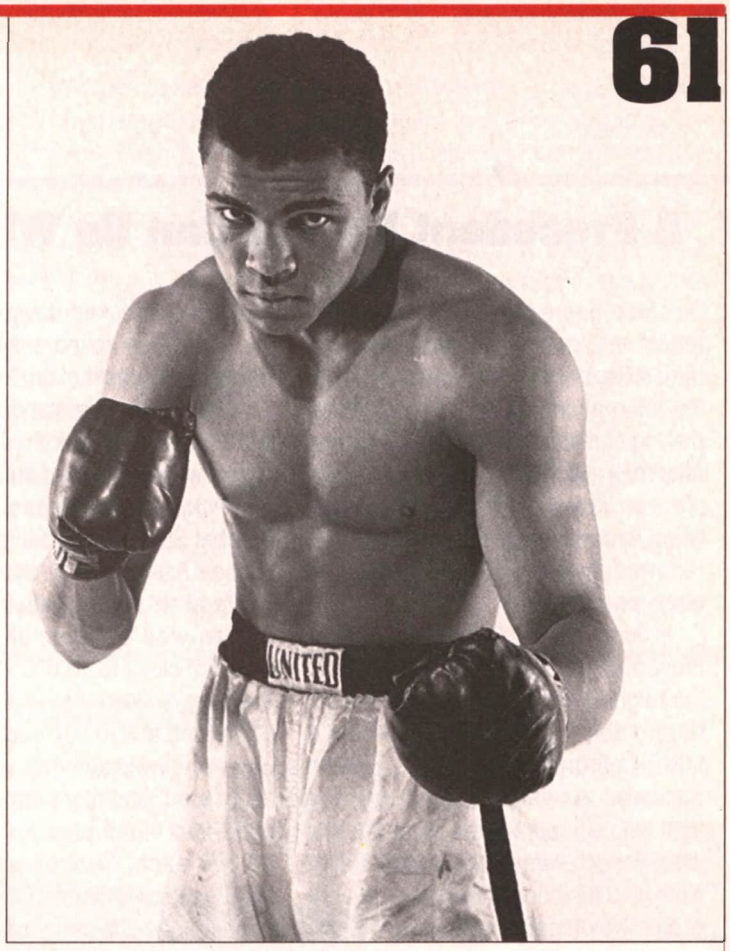

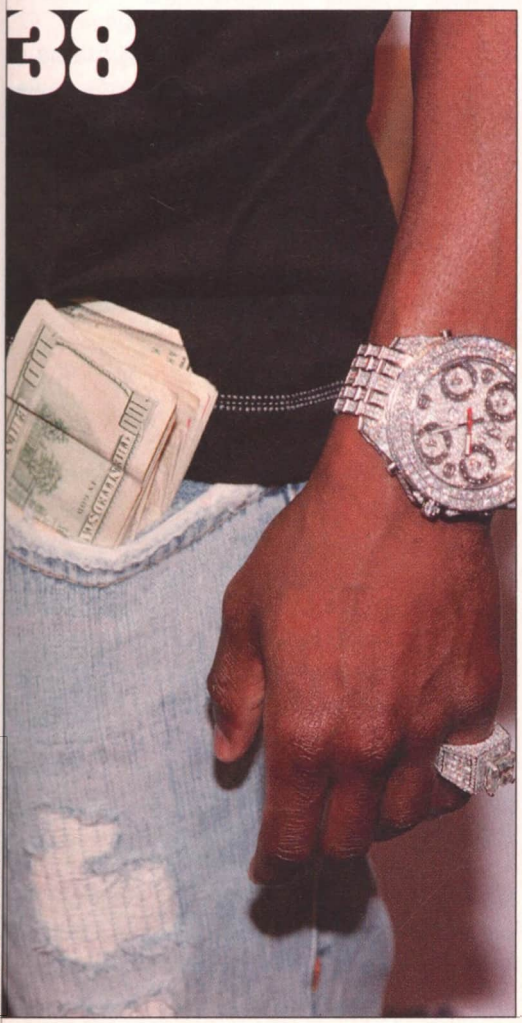

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

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A Precedent Boxing Can Do Without

It was a rare but regrettable occurrence: two former world champions in their 40s, both already enshrined in the International Boxing Hall of Fame, making comebacks more than 10 years after their last fight. But that's what took place on June 3 in Melbourne, Australia, when Azumah Nelson and Jeff Fenech renewed their rivalry and faced each other for a third time.

In June 1991, in Las Vegas, Fenech moved up to challenge Nelson, then the reigning WBC super featherweight titleholder, in an attempt to win a title in a fourth weight class. Fenech appeared a clear-cut winner, but the fight was scored a draw. Nine months later, Fenech was a hot favorite to beat Nelson in Melbourne, outdoors in front of a crowd of more than 37,000 people, only to be knocked down three times and stopped in round eight. It was THE RING's 1992 Upset of the Year.

There was understandable criticism in the lead-up to their third match. The boxers were tested and duly licensed by the Victorian Professional Boxing and Combat Sport Board, but the Australian Medical Association opposed it.

Despite the negativity, the promotion was a financial success. A crowd of close to 10,000 attended and there were 60 ringside dinner tables purchased at $10,000 each. The home pay-per-view audience was deemed "significant" and more than a thousand pubs and clubs paid for the fight at $2,000 each. Sydney entrepreneur Max Markson promoted the event with Fenech, and it is anticipated that each boxer will be paid more than a million U.S. dollars. The event was certainly bigger than the Anthony Mundine-Sam Soliman fight in the same venue four weeks earlier.

In the ring, 44-year-old Fenech, 29-3-1 (21), and 49-year-old Nelson, 39-6-2 (28), put on a competitive effort to the point where neither was embarrassed greatly. No one could question their commitment once the opening bell rang. They fought with courage, respect, and honor. Sure, they were heavier and slower, but at times their techniques were fleeting windows into past glories. Fenech received the majority points win by tallies of 96-94 (twice) and 95-95, though it appeared he had won by a greater margin.

Deep down they are still fighters. It

PHOTO BY QUINN ROONEY/GETTY IMAGES

Nelson shows flashes of his old form

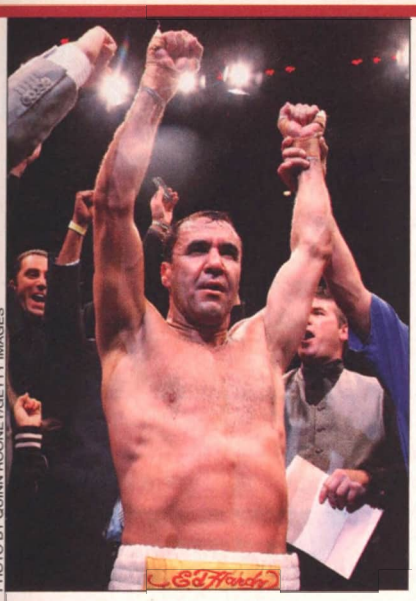


PHOTO BY QUINN ROONEY/GETTY IMAGES

Fenech celebrates his "little" win

isn't something that can just be turned off. Although they would not have been fighting if the money weren't important, both boxers spoke of charity projects close to their hearts.

"People are asking why I wanted to fight at 49. That is my life," said Nelson. "I like to see people happy. If I can make money to help people who need it, I am more than happy to do it. In Africa, we have a lot of poverty. I am doing the best that I can to help these people."

Fenech was correct in not over-emphasizing any significance of the victory and called it a "little" win. Nothing he did that night was going to erase the past.

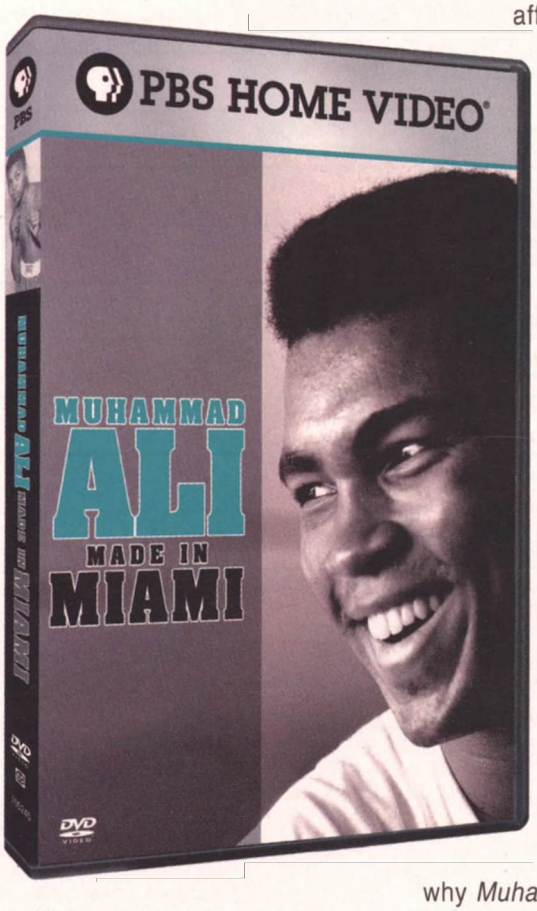
"I have always said Azumah is the greatest champion," said Fenech. "He is a very special man. I don't know how this is going to sound, but I love him very much. He has been a major part of my life."

Ultimately, it was what it was—two old, retired boxers, way past their primes, coming back for a fight of little significance, except to them and their diehard fans. It was fortunate for boxing that there was no further controversy and neither boxer was seriously hurt, although Australian journalist Tony Sheahan reported that "Fenech spent the fight night recuperating from a broken rib and busted hand, and was struggling to breathe."

—Paul Upham

Little New In New Ali Documentary

The title of this PBS DVD is a bit misleading. *Muhammad Ali: Made In Miami* may promise viewers a different slant on the life and times of Cassius Clay around the years 1961 to 1967, but in reality, the 50-minute biography offers little more than affirmation of all the time-worn Ali clichés we've come to expect in the media—Ali the Olympian, Ali the Civil Rights champion, Ali the Muslim, Ali the conscientious objector, Ali the slicker-than-snot-on-a-doorknob boxer—all of which had been brought to life on screen and in print years ago.



This bio begins just after Ali's triumphant Olympic experience when he arrives in Overtown, the black Mecca of Miami. But except for a few stills of Ali mugging with some Overtown youth and a 30-second testimonial from Dr. Ferdie Pacheco on the character of Miami's North Fifth Street Gym where Ali trained, viewers may wonder what impact Miami really had on Ali, if any at all.

Rather than explore the Miami connection, though, PBS hands over the documentary to Ali biographers and insiders, such as Pacheco and Angelo Dundee, who give predictably one-sided accounts of Ali's comings and goings. Clay/Ali partisans remind viewers throughout that Sonny Liston was a corrupt thug, that Ali was treated unfairly for refusing to report for duty in Vietnam, and that white America hated Ali for his boisterousness and affiliation with the Black Muslim Movement.

Where the DVD breaks new ground is when it dares to shed light on some of Ali's flaws, most notably his lack of technical boxing proficiency and his abhorrent treatment of Malcolm X, which the DVD seems to suggest may have played some part in the firebrand advocate's assassination.

Let's face it, in his current condition Ali is simply too sympathetic a figure to be judged harshly, especially by those who prospered from their association with him. So as long as Ali remains alive, boxing fans are not likely to see a balanced portrayal of his life and his career; just as history buffs will never see an objective account of Senator Joseph McCarthy's as long as he remains dead. We can see why *Muhammad Ali: Made In Miami* may tend toward a hagiography, but the least PBS could have done was stay true to the DVD's title.

—Frank Krewda

TV Fights of the Month

Compiled By Martin Mulcahey

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
6/20/08	Friday Ahunanya W 10 Alonzo Butler *Friday knocks Butler into next week*	ESPN2	h	C+	B-	B
6/20/08	Andre Ward KO 8 Jerson Ravelo *Olympic champ is on verge of mining gold in the pros*	Show	sm	B-	C+	C+
6/21/08	Chris Arreola DQ 3 Chazz Witherspoon *Underrated accuracy makes Arreola best young American heavy*	HBO	h	B+	B-	B
6/21/08	Andre Berto KO 7 Miguel Rodriguez *Berto pounces on opponent and fortuitous title vacancy*	HBO	w	B+	C+	C+
6/21/08	Raul Marquez W 12 Giovanni Lorenzo *Raul's scar tissue is older than Lorenzo*	Show	m	B+	B-	B
6/21/08	Arthur Abraham KO 5 Edison Miranda *The most striking U.S. debut by a German since Marlene Dietrich*	Show	sm	A-	A-	B
6/25/08	Julio Diaz KO 5 David Torres *Torres a finalist for 2008 Golden Enswell Award*	ESPN2	l	B-	C	C+
6/26/08	Vanes Martirosyan W 10 Angel Hernandez *Vanes knocks down but can't stop professional survivor*	Versus	jm	B-	C+	C+
6/26/08	Anthony Peterson W 12 Fernando Trejo *Peterson sharp without looking overpowering*	Versus	l	B	B-	C
6/27/08	Abner Mares W 10 Jonathan Arias *Arias gave his all just to last the distance*	Telef	jf	B	C	C
6/28/08	Monte Barrett KO 1 Tye Fields *A bad kayo loss for Fields was inevitable*	PPV	h	C+	B-	B-
6/28/08	Francisco Lorenzo W DQ 4 Humberto Soto *The Academy Award goes to Francisco "Play Dead" Lorenzo*	PPV	jl	B+	A-	C
6/28/08	Steven Luevano D 12 Mario Santiago *Fight deserved a much wider audience*	PPV	f	A-	A-	A
6/28/08	Manny Pacquiao KO 9 David Diaz *The legend grows with every weight class conquered*	PPV	l	A+	A-	A-
7/02/08	Brian Minto KO 1 John Poore *Loser lives down to his surname*	ESPN2	h	C+	C-	C
7/04/08	Enrique Ornelas KO 2 Daryl Salmon *Salmon suffers bad shoulder separation after landing a jab*	Telef	m	B-	C	C
7/05/08	Kendall Holt KO 1 Ricardo Torres *Now taking applications for second place in Round of the Year voting*	Show	jw	A-	A	A
7/09/08	Chris Henry KO 6 Rubin Williams *Busted lip tells the corner to throw in the towel*	ESPN2	lh	B-	C	C
7/11/08	Miguel Huerta W 10 Juan Cruz *Huerta survives an ostensible kayo punch in seventh to win*	Telef	l	C+	C+	C+
7/11/08	Mariusz Wach KO 7 Eric Boose *Proof that all talented Eastern European heavies fight in Europe*	ESPN2	h	C-	C	C
7/11/08	Tomasz Adamek KO 7 Gary Gomez *Target practice for Tomasz*	ESPN2	c	B+	C	C
7/12/08	Ulises Solis W 12 Glenn Donaire *I don't think little brother will avenge this loss*	TV Azteca	jfl	A-	B	C+
7/12/08	Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. W 10 Matt Vanda *100-90 score for Chavez had me hurling my beer too!*	TV Azteca	jm	C+	B-	B-
7/12/08	Wladimir Klitschko KO 11 Tony Thompson *Late kayo lone bright spot for Wladimir*	HBO	h	A	C+	C
7/16/08	Delvin Rodriguez KO 10 Oscar Diaz *Boxer in ESPN fight suffers brain injury; SportsCenter leads with Favre comeback*	ESPN2	w	B-	B-	F
7/16/08	James Toney KO 3 Hassim Rahman *Rahman TKO'd by his own words*	FSN	h	B+	B	C

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(RING championship fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox Sports Net; Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo

Mando Ramos, 1948-2008

Mando Ramos—who turned pro at 17, won the lightweight title at 20, and was washed-up by the time he was 23—died at his San Pedro, California, on July 6. He was 59 years old. Few who had followed his tempestuous career would have figured he'd last anywhere near as long as he did.

"I never really trained, not for a single fight," Ramos once told the *Los Angeles Times*. "Oh, I went to the gym every day. But I drank every night. Fighters never beat me. Drugs and alcohol did ... by 1974, I was sleeping in cars."

Handsome, charismatic, and talented, Ramos had his first pro fight in November 1965, and by the following June was attracting sellout crowds to the Olympic Auditorium.

"When you think of Mando Ramos, you can't help but think what he could have been had he only taken care of business," Hall of Fame promoter Don Chargin told sportswriter Doug Krikorian upon learning of Ramos' death due to respiratory arrest. "He had such crossover appeal, much like Oscar De La Hoya. The Hollywood crowd loved him. I remember Ed Asner and the entire cast of *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* were always coming to his fights, as did Fernando Lamas, Ricardo Montalban, Jack Lemmon, Robert Conrad, and many others from the entertainment industry. And he was a terrific fighter. But we'll never know how good he could have been, because he never trained. He should have become one of the greats."

It looked like that was exactly where Ramos was headed when he stopped Teo Cruz on cuts to win the world lightweight title on February 18, 1969, in front of 14,200 fan at Los Angeles' Memorial Coliseum. But after just one successful defense, Ramos lost the title to Ismael Laguna in March '70.

His next fight, against Sugar Ramos, was a classic slugfest. "No doubt it's one of the best, if not the best, fight I've ever seen," said Chargin of Mando's thrilling10-round split decision over the former featherweight champion.

Subsequent wins over Raul Rojas and Ruben Navarro earned Ramos a shot at the vacant WBC belt, November '71, in his opponent's hometown of Madrid, Spain. Although Ramos floored Pedro Carrasco four times, he was disqualified by referee Samuel Odubote in the 12th round for allegedly throwing Carrasco to the canvas. THE RING's European correspondent, J.A. Tree, called the verdict an "inept decision of an inexperienced official" based on a "flimsy and questionable occurrence."

The controversy resulted in a February '72 rematch in Los Angeles and a rubber match back in Madrid, both of which Ramos won via 15-round decisions to regain and defend the title. But his party hardy lifestyle continued unabated, and Chango Carmona ended Ramos' second reign in September '72, knocking him out in the fifth round.

After only winning four of his next 10 bouts, Ramos, 37-11-6 (23), ended his career on October 29, 1975, with a second-round kayo loss to Wayne Beale.

Then, in a dramatic personal turnaround, Ramos checked into a drug rehab clinic in the early-1980s and remained clean and sober the rest of his life. He also started a non-profit youth foundation, Boxing Against Alcohol and Drugs (B.A.A.D.), and counseled and trained hundreds of inner-city kids.

Ramos as he looked as a teenage sensation

Outside the Ropes

De La Hoya: Helping school kids

Oscar De La Hoya donated $3.5-million to Green Dot Public Schools, saying: "Growing up in East Los Angeles, I know how important it is to keep a positive attitude and stay focused on your goals. I'm so proud of those students. Every one of them deserves a quality education and I'm honored to help them realize their dreams" ... Following one season on NBC and two on ESPN, *The Contender* has found a new home on the Versus network. The fourth season, which will feature a 16-man cruiserweight tournament, debuts in December. "We're the show that refused to die. We're like the fighter that keeps getting off the mat to fight on," said **Jeff Wald**, co-executive producer of the Tournament of Contenders promotional company ... National idol **Manny Pacquiao** will be the Philippine flag-bearer and lead his country's 15-athlete delegation into the stadium for the opening ceremonies of the Beijing Olympics ... In July, junior welterweight champion **Ricky Hatton** made his debut as a standup comedian in Stevenage, England, raising money for the Murry Foundation in Limpopo, South Africa, which looks after children born with HIV. Hatton then took his 45-minute comedy routine to the English seaside town of Bournemouth before departing for a two-night gig in Tenerife in the Canary Islands ... According to the Associated Press, former heavyweight champion **Evander Holyfield**, 45, reached agreement in a child-support case and avoided a hearing that could have led to a call for jail time. **Randy Kessler**, attorney for **Toi Irvin**, the mother of Holyfield's 10-year-old son, said the ex-champ paid $9,000 in back child support and agreed to meet his other financial obligations within a month ... In June, two boxers were robbed of championship belts in different incidents. IBF middleweight titleholder **Arthur Abraham** had his rental car broken into at the Miami Airport while looking for a luggage cart. Along with his IBF belt, an IBF ring, a video camera, mobile phone, laptop, and various gifts he was taking home to Germany following his title defense against **Edison Miranda** were taken. Meanwhile, in Las Cruces, New Mexico, an NABF belt and a ring were stolen from **Johnny Tapia**'s home ... Trouble continues to pile up for former featherweight contender **Scott Harrison**, who admitted assaulting his girlfriend, **Stacey Gardner**, at his Cambuslang, Scotland, home. The Glasgow Sheriff Court deferred sentencing until it received background reports ... **Alhaji Shaban Mintanga**, president of the Boxing Federation of Tanzania, has been charged with trafficking in narcotics. The case emanates from the recent arrests of Tanzanian boxers who were found with 373 pellets of heroine in Mauritius, an island nation off the coast of the African continent ... Undefeated junior middleweight **Harry Joe Yorgey**, 20-0 (9), is facing DUI charges after he was arrested by the Pennsylvania State Police for allegedly driving at a high rate of speed and being under the influence of alcohol ... New Brunswick, Canada, boxing legend **Jerry Doiron**, 88, died of cancer on July 7. The former Maritime light heavyweight champion made his biggest mark as a manager, trainer, and official. Doiron worked the corner for 16 of former light heavyweight contender **Yvon Durelle**'s fights, operated boxing clubs in Moncton, New Brunswick, and Kitchener, Ontario, and was president of the Ontario Amateur Boxing Association for two terms ... Super bantamweight prospect **Jonas Hernandez**, 25, was shot to death in Agua Dilla, Puerto Rico, on June 15. According to co-manager **Ricardo Figueroa**, Hernandez, 9-1 (2), was ambushed on his way to mediate a dispute ... Former welter and junior middleweight clubfighter **Eddie Van Kirk** died on June 22 of wounds suffered in November 2007, when he chased a burglar out of his Baltimore, Maryland, house and knocked him down. While on the ground, the perpetrator pulled a gun and shot Van Kirk, who had compiled a record of 27-9 (13) while boxing professionally from 1982 until '95 ... Junior flyweight **Samora Msophi**, 24, died on June 30 of a head injury suffered four days earlier in a bout with South African 108-pound champion **Mfundo Gwayana**, 9-3 (4), at the Orient Theatre in East London, South Africa. Msophi, 8-2 (5), was knocked down in the first and third rounds. Following a 10-punch barrage from Gwayana in the fourth round, referee **Alan Matakane** finally stepped in and stopped the fight as Msophi slumped to the canvas. The *Sowetan* newspaper reported that the oxygen equipment used in an attempt to revive Msophi in the ring did not work properly and that it was 20 minutes after he collapsed before the boxer was rushed to the hospital.

Abraham: Belt stolen at airport

Hatton: Delivers punchlines

Quotable

"How can he tell all the people in Grand Rapids he's a billionaire? He won't be a billionaire in a billion years. Mark my words, someday he'll be running through the streets of Grand Rapids broke."

—Floyd Mayweather Sr., discussing Floyd Jr.'s financial situation in an interview published in ***The Grand Rapids Press***

"I like the Goat. Goat is my favorite food."

—Manny Pacquiao, commenting on the billy goat wearing a Chicago Cubs baseball hat that was on display during a media event prior to his ninth-round kayo of Chicago resident David Diaz

[Ratings Analysis]

For Period Ended July 20, 2008

Heavyweights: Tony Thompson (eighth last issue) exits after his lethargic performance against number-one rated Wladimir Klitschko. Thompson is replaced by Chris Arreola, who debuts at 10. The change bumps John Ruiz from 10 to nine.

Cruiserweights: Tomasz Adamek (third last issue) switches with Jean-Marc Mormeck (second last issue), based on Adamek's greater inactivity.

Light Heavyweights: Hugo Garay replaces Juergen Braehmer at 10, thanks to his victory over Yuri Barashian.

Super Middleweights: No changes.

Middleweights: Raul Marquez replaces Giovanni Lorenzo at 10 based on his decision victory over Lorenzo. Second-rated Winky Wright just missed the cut-off date for being eliminated from the ratings by a day, since he had not fought since July 21, 2007. If he does not have a fight scheduled by the next issue, Wright will exit.

Junior Middleweights: Daniel Santos re-enters the ratings at seven after stopping Joachim Alcine (seventh last issue), who drops to eight. Santos' inclusion drops down everyone ranked from eight through 10 one spot each, forcing out Sergio Martinez from 10.

Welterweights: Andre Berto debuts at 10, replacing Kermit Cintron (10th last issue), on the strength of Berto's stoppage of Miki Rodriguez.

Junior Welterweights: Kendall Holt returns at to six after stopping Ricardo Torres (sixth last issue) in one round. Torres slips to seven. Holt's inclusion drops down everyone from seven through 10 one slot each, forcing out Demetrius Hopkins (10th last issue).

Lightweights: Major changes here, with Manny Pacquiao leaping to two after stopping David Diaz (second last issue). Diaz falls to four, moving everyone from four to eight down one rung each. Ali Funeka debuts at 10 after stopping Zahir Raheem (ninth last issue), who exits. Anthony Peterson (10th last issue) also departs to make room for Funeka.

Junior Lightweights: Pacquiao has voluntarily relinquished THE RING world championship.

Featherweights: Robert Guerrero (first last issue) has opted to campaign at junior lightweight. His exit moves up everyone from two to six last issue one place each, making room for Mario Santiago at six. Santiago enters based on his draw against third-rated Steven Luevano (fourth last issue). Orlando Salido enters at 10, replacing Guty Espadas Jr.

Junior Featherweights: No changes.

Bantamweights: No changes.

Junior Bantamweights: No changes.

Flyweights: No changes.

Junior Flyweights: No changes.

Strawweights: No changes.

Pound-for-pound: No changes.

"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

Pound-For-Pound

1. **Manny Pacquiao**
   Lightweight
2. **Joe Calzaghe**
   Super Middleweight/
   Light Heavyweight
3. **Juan Manuel Marquez**
   Junior Lightweight
4. **Bernard Hopkins**
   Light Heavyweight
5. **Israel Vazquez**
   Junior Featherweight
6. **Miguel Cotto**
   Welterweight
7. **Kelly Pavlik**
   Middleweight
8. **Cristian Mijares**
   Junior Bantamweight
9. **Rafael Marquez**
   Junior Featherweight
10. **Ivan Calderon**
    Junior Flyweight

For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to **TheRing-online.com**

[The Ring Ratings]

For Period Ended July 20, 2008

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on "Ratings" at thering-online.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Andre Berto makes his welterweight debut in the ratings by stopping Miki Rodriguez

Heavyweights

Weight Unlimited

Champ: Vacant

1. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** Ukraine 51-3 (45)
2. **SAMUEL PETER** Nigeria 30-1 (23)
3. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV** Uzbekistan 24-0-1 (17)
4. **NICOLAY VALUEV** Russia 48-1 (34)
5. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN** Russia 16-0 (12)
6. **SULTAN IBRAGIMOV** Russia 22-1-1 (17)
7. **OLEG MASKAEV** Kazakhstan 34-6 (26)
8. **VLADIMIR VIRCHIS** Ukraine 24-1 (20)
9. **JOHN RUIZ** Chelsea, MA 43-7-1 (29)
10. **CHRIS ARREOLA** Riverside, CA 24-0 (21)

Jr. Middleweights

Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **VERNO PHILLIPS** Belize 42-10-1 (21)
2. **SERGIO MORA** Los Angeles, CA 21-0-1 (5)
3. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** Los Angeles, CA 39-5 (30)
4. **VERNON FORREST** Atlanta, GA 40-3 (29)
5. **CORY SPINKS** St. Louis, MO 36-5 (11)
6. **ALEX BUNEMA** Dominican Republic 30-5-2 (16)
7. **DANIEL SANTOS** Puerto Rico 32-3 (23)
8. **JOACHIM ALCINE** Haiti 30-1 (19)
9. **SERGEI DZINZIRUK** Ukraine 35-0 (22)
10. **ROMAN KARMAZIN** Russia 36-4-1 (23)

Featherweights

Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CHRIS JOHN** Indonesia 41-0-1 (22)
2. **JORGE SOLIS** Mexico 35-1-2 (25)
3. **STEVEN LUEVANO** La Puente, CA 35-1-1 (15)
4. **HIROYUKI ENOKI** Japan 27-0-2 (19)
5. **JORGE LINARES** Venezuela 25-0 (16)
6. **MARIO SANTIAGO** Puerto Rico 19-1-1 (14)
7. **MARTIN HONORIO** Mexico 24-4-1 (12)
8. **NICKY COOK** England 28-1(16)
9. **TAKAHIRO AOH** Japan 16-0-1 (8)
10. **ORLANDO SALIDO** Mexico 30-9-2 (20)

Jr. Featherweights

Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: ISRAEL VAZQUEZ Mexico 43-4 (31)

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 37-5 (33)
2. **CELESTINO CABALLERO** Panama 29-2 (20)
3. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ** Puerto Rico 22-0 (20)
4. **STEVE MOLITOR** Canada 27-0 (10)
5. **POONSAWAT KRATINGAENGGYM** Thailand 35-1 (25
6. **SERGIO MANUEL MEDINA** Argentina 32-1 (17)
7. **TAKALANI NDLOVU** South Africa 28-4 (18)
8. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON** Mexico 34-2 (30)
9. **REY BAUTISTA** Philippines 25-1 (18)
10. **JHONNY GONZALEZ** Mexico 38-6 (32)

Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA** Japan 24-2 (8)
2. **ANSELMO MORENO** Panama 22-1-1 (8)
3. **WLADIMIR SIDORENKO** Ukraine 21-1-2 (7)
4. **SILENCE MABUZA** South Africa 22-2 (18)
5. **GERRY PENALOSA** Philippines 53-6-2 (36)
6. **JOSEPH AGBEKO** Ghana 25-1 (22)
7. **ABNER MARES** Mexico 17-0 (10)
8. **LUIS PEREZ** Nicaragua 25-2 (16)
9. **SASHA BAKHTIN** Russia 19-0 (8)
10. **VUSI MALINGA** South Africa 18-2-1 (11)

Cruiserweights
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM** Philadelphia, PA 21-1 (11)
2. **TOMASZ ADAMEK** Poland 35-1 (24)
3. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK** Guadeloupe 33-4 (22)
4. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK** Poland 41-2 (31)
5. **FIRAT ARSLAN** Germany 29-3-1 (18)
6. **O'NEIL BELL** Jamaica 26-3-1 (24)
7. **ENZO MACCARINELLI** Wales 28-2 (21)
8. **MARCO HUCK** Yugoslavia 21-1 (16)
9. **VADIM TOKAREV** Russia 24-1-1 (17)
10. **RUDOLF KRAJ** Czech Republic 14-0 (10)

Light Heavyweights
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: JOE CALZAGHE Wales 45-0 (32)

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS** Philadelphia, PA 48-5-1 (32)
2. **ANTONIO TARVER** Orlando, FL 27-4 (19)
3. **CHAD DAWSON** New Haven, CT 26-0 (17)
4. **GLEN JOHNSON** Jamaica 47-12-2 (32)
5. **ZSOLT ERDEI** Hungary 29-0 (17)
6. **ROY JONES** Pensacola, FL 52-4 (38)
7. **CLINTON WOODS** England 41-4-1 (24)
8. **ADRIAN DIACONU** Romania 25-0 (15
9. **CHRIS HENRY** Houston, TX 22-1 (18)
10. **HUGO GARAY** Argentina 31-3 (17)

Super Middleweights
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: JOE CALZAGHE Wales 45-0 (32)

1. **MIKKEL KESSLER** Denmark 40-1 (30)
2. **ANTHONY MUNDINE** Australia 32-3 (23)
3. **LUCIAN BUTE** Romania 22-0 (18)
4. **LIBRADO ANDRADE** Mexico 27-1 (21)
5. **JEFF LACY** St. Petersburg, FL 23-1 (17)
6. **CARL FROCH** England 23-0 (19)
7. **ALLAN GREEN** Tulsa, OK 26-1 (18)
8. **SAKIO BIKA** Cameroon 26-3-2 (16)
9. **DENIS INKIN** Russia 32-0 (24)
10. **JERMAIN TAYLOR** Little Rock, AR 27-2-1 (17)

Middleweights
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: KELLY PAVLIK Youngstown, OH 34-0 (30)

1. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM** Armenia 27-0 (22)
2. **FELIX STURM** Germany 30-2-1 (13)
3. **WINKY WRIGHT** St. Petersburg, FL 51-4-1 (25)
4. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER** Germany 29-2 (14)
5. **AMIN ASIKAINEN** Finland 24-1 (16)
6. **RANDY GRIFFIN** Louisville, KY 24-2-3 (12)
7. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO** Spain 62-8 (43)
8. **RAYMOND JOVAL** Netherlands 37-4 (16)
9. **DAVID LOPEZ** Mexico 35-12 (22)
10. **RAUL MARQUEZ** Mexico 41-3-1 (29)

Welterweights
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MIGUEL COTTO** Puerto Rico 32-0 (26)
2. **SHANE MOSLEY** Pomona, CA 44-5 (37)
3. **PAUL WILLIAMS** Augusta, GA 34-1 (25)
4. **ANTONIO MARGARITO** Torrence, CA 36-5 (26)
5. **CARLOS QUINTANA** Puerto Rico 25-2 (19)
6. **ZAB JUDAH** Brooklyn, NY 36-5 (25)
7. **JOSHUA CLOTTEY** Ghana 34-2 (20)
8. **LUIS COLLAZO** Queens, NY 28-3 (13)
9. **JACKSON BONSU** Ghana 28-1 (23)
10. **ANDRE BERTO** Winter Haven, FL 22-0 (19)

Jr. Welterweights
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: RICKY HATTON England 44-1 (31)

1. **PAUL MALIGNAGGI** Brooklyn, NY 25-1 (5)
2. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY** Palm Springs, CA 22-0 (11)
3. **JUNIOR WITTER** England 36-2-2 (21)
4. **ANDREAS KOTELNIK** Ukraine 29-2-1 (13)
5. **HERMAN NGOUDJO** Cameroon 17-2 (9)
6. **KENDALL HOLT** Paterson, NJ 24-2 (13)
7. **RICARDO TORRES** Colombia 32-2 (28)
8. **JUAN URANGO** Colombia 20-1-1 (16)
9. **LOVEMORE NDOU** South Africa 46-10-1 (31)
10. **JUAN LAZCANO** Mexico 37-5-1 (27)

Lightweights
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JOEL CASAMAYOR Cuba 36-3-1 (22)

1. **NATE CAMPBELL** Jacksonville, FL 32-5-1 (25)
2. **MANNY PACQUIAO** Philippines 47-3-2 (35)
3. **JUAN DIAZ** Houston, TX 33-1 (17)
4. **DAVID DIAZ** Chicago, IL 34-2-1 (17)
5. **JOSE SANTA CRUZ** Mexico 25-3 (14)
6. **JULIO DIAZ** Mexico 35-4 (26)
7. **MICHAEL KATSIDIS** Australia 23-1 (20)
8. **AMIR KHAN** England 18-0 (14)
9. **YURI ROMANOV** Belarus 21-2 (14)
10. **ALI FUNEKA** South Africa 30-1-2 (25)

Jr. Lightweights
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 48-4-1 (35)
2. **JOAN GUZMAN** Dominican Republic 28-0 (17)
3. **EDWIN VALERO** Venezuela 24-0 (24)
4. **HUMBERTO SOTO** Mexico 44-7-2 (28)
5. **JORGE BARRIOS** Argentina 47-3-1 (34)
6. **ALEX ARTHUR** Scotland 26-1 (19)
7. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI** Thailand 56-3-1 (45)
8. **CASSIUS BALOYI** South Africa 35-3-1 (18)
9. **MZONKE FANA** South Africa 27-4 (10)
10. **ROCKY JUAREZ** Houston, TX 27-4 (19)

Jr. Bantamweights
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CRISTIAN MIJARES** Mexico 35-3-2 (14)
2. **FERNANDO MONTIEL** Mexico 37-3-1 (28)
3. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ** Venezuela 32-3 (27)
4. **NOBUO NASHIRO** Japan 11-1 (7)
5. **JORGE ARCE** Mexico 49-4-1 (37)
6. **DIMITRI KIRILOV** Russia 29-3-1 (9)
7. **JOSE NAVARRO** Los Angeles, CA 26-4 (12)
8. **Z GORRES** Philippines 28-2-2 (15)
9. **VIC DARCHINYAN** Armenia 29-1-1 (23)
10. **A.J. BANAL** Philippines 17-0-1 (14)

Flyweights
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **NONITO DONAIRE** Philippines 19-1 (12)
2. **DAISUKE NAITO** Japan 32-2-3 (20)
3. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM** Thailand 67-3-1 (35)
4. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA** Japan 32-4-2 (15)
5. **OMAR NARVAEZ** Argentina 27-0-2 (17)
6. **ROBERTO VASQUEZ** Panama 26-2 (19)
7. **DENKAOSAN KAOVICHIT** Thailand 43-1-1 (18)
8. **JOSE LOPEZ** Puerto Rico 36-7-2 (30)
9. **KOKI KAMEDA** Japan 18-0 (12)
10. **HUGO CAZARES** Mexico 26-4-1 (19)

Jr. Flyweights
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: IVAN CALDERON Puerto Rico 31-0 (6)

1. **ULISES SOLIS** Mexico 27-1-2 (20)
2. **GIOVANNI SEGURA** Mexico 19-0-1 (15)
3. **EDGAR SOSA** Mexico 32-5 (17)
4. **JUANITO RUBILLAR** Philippines 46-10-7 (22)
5. **OMAR NINO** Mexico 25-3-1 (11)
6. **DANIEL REYES** Colombia 39-5-1 (30)
7. **NELSON DIEPPA** Puerto Rico 25-5-2 (14)
8. **BRAHIM ASLOUM** France 23-2 (9)
9. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO** Argentina 18-1 (9)
10. **ADRIAN HERNANDEZ** Mexico 13-0-1 (11)

Strawweights
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **YUTAKA NIIDA** Japan 23-1-3 (9)
2. **RAUL GARCIA** Mexico 23-0-1 (15)
3. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI** Thailand 27-0 (11)
4. **EAGLE KYOWA** Thailand 18-2 (6)
5. **FLORANTE CONDES** Philippines 22-4-1 (20)
6. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN** Indonesia 62-6-5 (31)
7. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA** Japan 21-3 (9)
8. **DONNIE NIETES** Philippines 22-1-3 (13)
9. **OMAR SOTO** Puerto Rico 13-2-1 (6)
10. **NKOSINATHI JOYI** South Africa 18-0 (14)

By Jeff Ryan

Hot Sport, Summer In The City

Don't count me among those folks who love the summer. The season's activities are great (beach, barbecues, outdoor concerts, street festivals), but the weather is a curse. My base of operations is super-humid New York City, where, if you don't have the air conditioner on, you can't so much as open your mail in July or August without being drenched from head to toe in sweat. My house goes through more Right Guards every summer than the Oakland Raiders training camp.

Some people, of course, crave this kind of weather. Friends of mine refer to a 97-degree bake-off, the kind of afternoon when you can literally see the heat waves dancing off the pavement and need a sunscreen with an SPF of about 140, as "a beautiful day." Meanwhile, if an August weekend turns out to be an unseasonably cool 79 and mercifully overcast, they'll refer to it as the "bad weather we've been having." It's at those times that your trusty columnist wants to lock them in an elevator with Manny Pacquiao after telling "Pac Man" that they said something nasty about his mother.

Well, my Frigidaire is now running like Paulie Malignaggi in a 12-rounder, the iced tea is chillin' alongside my keyboard, and my mood is improving by the minute. And that's a good thing because there are a few topics that deserve my attention this month, attention that shouldn't be spent only on things like heat indexes, fear of blackouts, and wondering how much a two-bedroom apartment goes for in Antarctica.

Here's some of what's been in the news:

Pacquiao fight rumors are heating up: There was concern that the new pound-for pound king might be on the decline, but his pulverizing of WBC lightweight titlist David Diaz was one of Pacquiao's best outings ever. So now, as happens whenever "Pac-Man" looks impressive and/or conquers a new weight class, the hysteria takes over and wild speculation arises about whom his next opponent might be.

Ricky Hatton is a likely choice, but now the name Oscar De La Hoya is also being tossed around. That would mean a jump for Pacquiao, who turned pro as a *flyweight*, all the way up to welterweight, if not junior middle. Sure, Pacquiao

PHOTO BY HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

Pacquiao's one-sided destruction of Diaz prompts wild speculation

PHOTO BY PETER KRAMER/GETTY IMAGES

Guess why McKay used to aggravate Ryan

looked strong at 135 pounds, and his hand speed was amazing considering another climb in weight and the mileage on his odometer, but there's a limit to how high even Superman can fly.

Why stop at De La Hoya? Pacquiao-Pavlik on pay-per-view would be a bonanza. Pacquaio-Joe Calzaghe in 2010 could be next, followed by Pacquiao-Wladimir Klitschko, then the Pac-Man-Rocky Marciano computer fight. Save your money for that one.

Jim McKay passes away: The classy ABC sportscaster died in June at the age of 86. For those of us who grew up in the '60s and '70s, McKay was the godfather of sports TV. From his anchoring ABC's coverage of the Olympics, to his traveling the world to host just about every athletic endeavor imaginable, he was in our living rooms so much we thought he was a relative.

It pains me to admit, however, that McKay used to get on my nerves constantly. It wasn't really his fault. It's just that he was the one who kept cutting in to inform us boxing fanatics that the live Roberto Duran title defense we'd waited weeks for, or the replay of last Monday night's Muhammad Ali bout, would be "coming up a little bit later," after we'd sat through any one of a number of junk sports from wrist-wrestling to a dogsled race, to demolition derby, to the World Lumberjack Championships.

In those days, patience wasn't a virtue. It was a requirement to keep from kicking in the TV screen. And speaking of kicking in the TV screen ...

Some CBS stations ignore ELITE XC: Recently, fans of extreme combat wanted to pummel the CBS Eye until it was swollen shut and purple. They flooded Internet chat rooms and message boards with complaints after some network affiliates around the country chose not to air the controversial show. Imagine that. Television stations displaying good taste for a change.

Stop your whining, all you MMA loonies. During my college years in Western Pennsylvania, the local Pittsburgh stations often rated boxing on a par with tests of the Emergency Broadcast System. As a result, Saturday afternoon telecasts involving the likes of Roberto Duran, Thomas Hearns, and Salvador Sanchez were, despite being hyped all week in TV teasers and print ads, pre-empted in favor of black-and-white movies. Did you hear that? *Duran*, *Hearns*, and *Sanchez*. Not a bunch of cauliflower-eared muscleheads with 3-0 records and names like "Kimbo."

Floyd Mayweather retires: This one gets mentioned near the bottom of the list because although

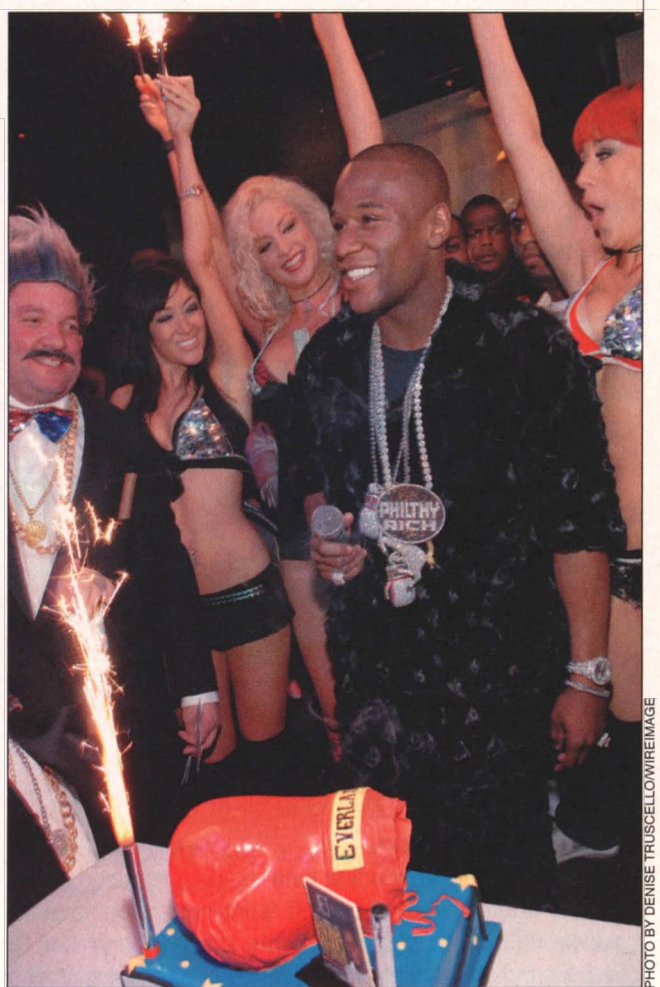


PHOTO BY DENISE TRUSCELLO/WIREIMAGE

Mayweather celebrates his 31st birthday with cake, bimbos, and cheesy Don King impersonator

Personal Perceptions:

The last word on everything from stars on the yellow brick road to stars on a cement sidewalk:

•According to *Sports Illustrated*, the $40,250,000 Mayweather earned in 2007 made him the fourth-highest paid American athlete behind golf's Tiger Woods ($127,902,706) and Phil Mickelson ($62,372,685) and NBA superstar LeBron James (40,455,000). Not surprisingly, most of Woods' income (about $105-million) came from endorsements. Most of Mayweather's haul came from purses. Just imagine what the Pretty Boy could have pocketed if boxing was as beloved by Madison Avenue as golf is.

•Paul Williams showed me something with his 2:15 demolition of Carlos Quintana in their rematch. Not to compare Williams to Joe Louis or a prime Roy Jones, but "The Punisher" had the same mentality those other two champions did after losing to Max Schmeling and Montell Griffin, respectively. Properly pissed off, they roared out in the return bout determined to turn their rivals into tipped-over exclamation points.

•Just one question about *Family Foreman*, the new TV Land reality show starring George Foreman and his brood: How, exactly, do you base a "reality" show on a guy whose entire life has been surreal?

•Pacquiao was certainly dominant against Diaz, and sustained no more wear and tear en route to the win. But the Filipino's trainer, Freddie Roach, made me shake my head when he said after Pacquiao's rematch with Juan Manuel Marquez in March that he doesn't want to see Pac-Man get hurt, and that he'll encourage the fighter "to start looking at wrapping some things up." Roach's idea of getting out sooner, rather than later, however, is *six more fights*, including the Diaz bout. Geez, you'd hate to think what Roach's idea of *not* protecting his fighter would be.

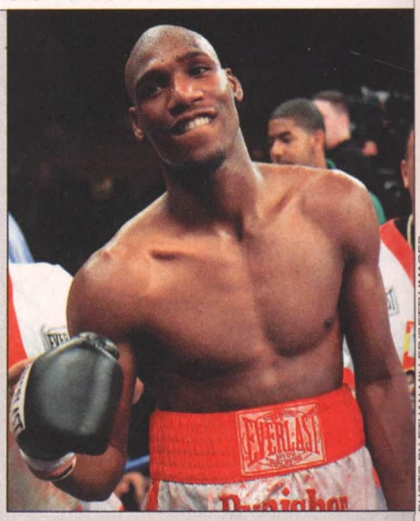


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Williams wasted no time avenging Quintana loss

•Chris Arreola was impressive in overwhelming fellow unbeaten heavy Chazz Witherspoon, so it's too bad that what would have been a kayo victory for Arreola instead goes into the books as a win by disqualification. Witherspoon's handlers, who put a stool in the corner and entered the ring before ref Randy Phillips had completed his count and ended the round, seemed as clueless as Barbra Streisand when she worked Ryan O'Neal's corner in *The Main Event*.

•Witherspoon, as you might know, is a college graduate with a degree in pharmaceutical marketing. That must have come in handy after the bout, when he was trying to figure out which headache remedy he needed the most.

•The most recent honorees to get stars on The Hollywood Walk of Fame are, get this, The Village People, actor Hugh Jackman, and Tinker Bell. And you thought the International Boxing Hall of Fame had lowered its standards.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Arreola overwhelms Witherspoon

this issue of THE RING is giving Mayweather's farewell more coverage than the first lunar landing received, fighters are fighters and no boxing retirement is chiseled in granite. In fact, boxing retirements are usually written in beach sand shortly before high tide. And I'm one guy who doesn't want to wax nostalgic about Mayweather's suddenly ended career, only to look foolish when he holds a press conference in December to announce a four-bout schedule for 2009.

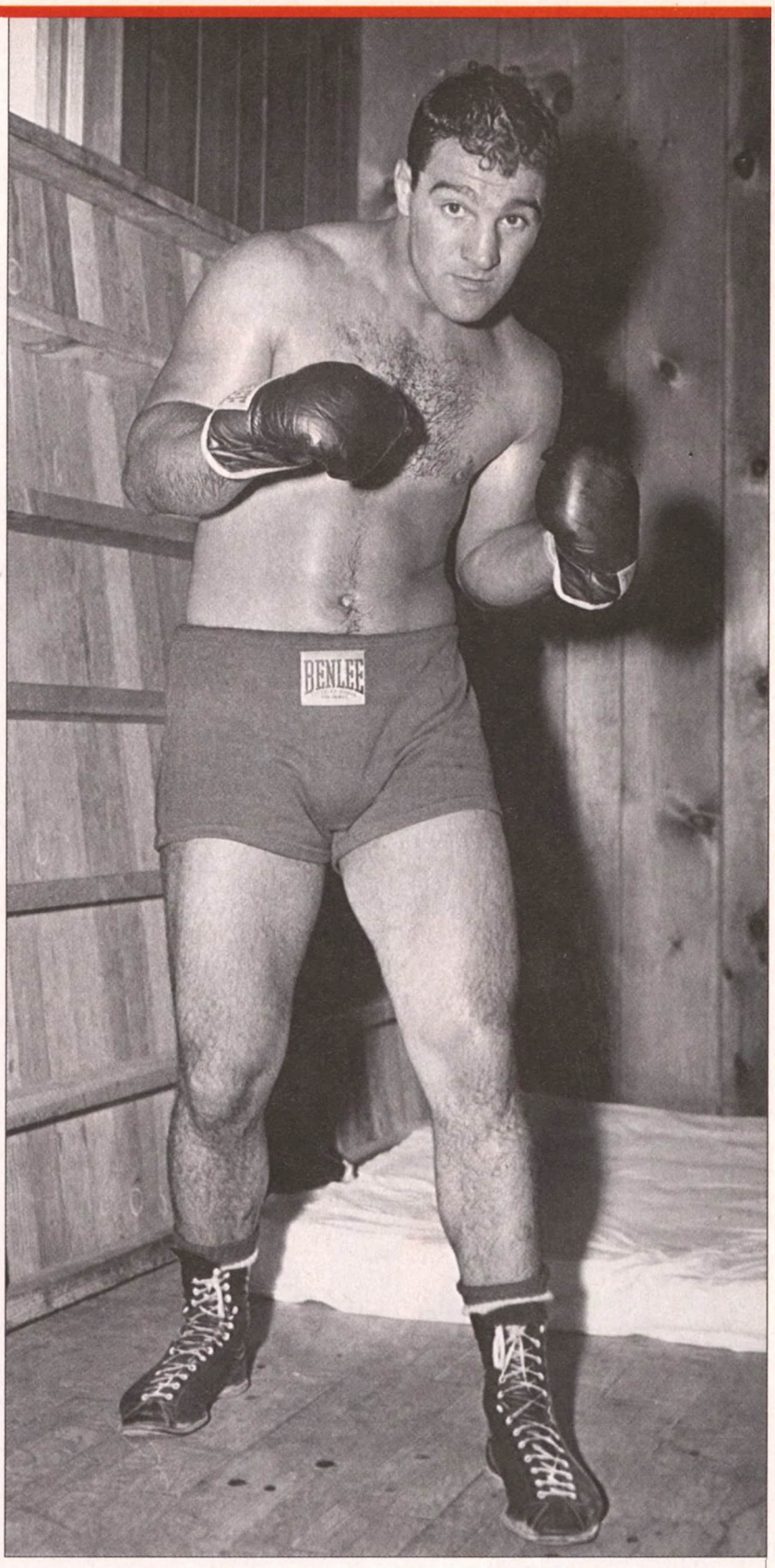
Assuming, however, that Mayweather is indeed walking away forever, then he deserves the kind of prolonged standing ovation given to baseball or football greats on the days they have their numbers retired. If it sticks, Mayweather's exit will rate as one of best timed, and thus one

of the purest, of any sports superstar. At the instant he said goodbye, he had an unblemished record, a belt collection that encompassed five weight classes, a vault load of money, and recognition as the best fighter, pound-for-pound, in the game.

The only sports retirements that would seem to compare are those of Rocky Marciano and Jim Brown. "The Brockton Blockbuster" retired as undefeated heavyweight champion, though one can make the case that he wasn't as close to his peak as Mayweather or Brown, who was coming off an MVP season with the Cleveland Browns.

Sugar Ray Leonard could have made a perfect exit after upsetting Marvin Hagler, but he couldn't resist the lure of more challenges/money. The same goes for Michael Jordan, who should have stayed on the shelf after hitting a shot to win his sixth NBA title. Hagler and Michael Spinks both stuck to their retirements, but they departed following bitter defeats. Bjorn Borg left as a superstar, but one who'd been exposed as beatable by John McEnroe. And though Sandy Koufax was only 30 when he said goodbye, he suffered from arm troubles that threatened his future.

Sure, coming back to knock out Miguel Cotto or moving up to middleweight to upset Pavlik would be a dazzling accomplishment. But virtually no one retires from boxing undefeated. For Mayweather, managing to resist that powerful urge to return, and proving that not all fighters are stubborn fools who are oblivious to the idea of self-preservation, would be even more impressive.



Was Marciano still in his prime when he retired?

Mayweather says HBO is biased: On his way out of the room, the ever-tactful "Pretty Boy" accused broadcasters on "The Network Of Champions" of playing favorites based on skin color.

"They talk about Pavlik, a white fighter, like he's the second coming," Mayweather told *The Grand Rapids Press*. "Or they go crazy over Pacquiao. But I'm a black fighter. Is it racial? Absolutely. They praise white fighters, Hispanic fighters, whatever. But black fighters, they never praise."

What nonsense. Hey, Floyd, pay better attention. The HBO announcers have long been biased, but it has nothing to do with color. They lead cheers for the fighter who is either: a) signed to an HBO contract, b) favored to win, or c) is considered a more valuable future property than the other guy. And they've launched more superlatives in your direction through the years than you fired punches at Ricky Hatton. ■

By Ivan Goldman

Vitali's Breakable Parts

Wait a minute. They're towing Vitali Klitschko out of the barn and scheduling a heavyweight contest between him and WBC titlist Samuel Peter for this fall? "Dr. Iron Fist" is a sweet guy, but planning an entire show around his 37-year-old, injury-plagued presence is a bit like assuming it won't snow this winter in Green Bay, Wisconsin. He's already pulled out of more fights than Starbucks has coffee shops.

PHOTO BY MYSHKO MARKIV/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Easy does it, Bill; you don't want to break his hand

Vitali's mile-long train of training injuries has made him a regular presence in trauma centers and orthopedic wards from Vegas to Vladivostok. The man's body is held together by machinists and welders. He could injure himself doing a crossword puzzle. Word is he once sustained a hairline fracture collecting his mail, and I'm talking e-mail. If he doesn't travel around town in a fully staffed ambulance, he ought to.

The last time they got him into the ring in one piece was in December 2004. It should have been written up in the *Journal Of The American Medical Association* and *Ripley's Believe It Or Not!* If I were putting up the line in Vegas, I'd devise an across-the-board ticket that lets bettors wager on the number of postponements.

Even if he makes it all the way to the weigh-in, Vitali's liable to sprain something climbing onto the scale. When they touch gloves, don't be surprised if a rib cracks. The first time Peter lands one to the body, I'm expecting one of Klitschko's toes to shatter. His cut man better carry spare body parts in his bucket. Forget rain checks, the fans should make sure they get torn-tendon vouchers.

The man's had more surgery than Joan Rivers and Michael Jackson put together. He's got more plastic parts than a Chinese chain saw. And metal

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Would Mosley-De La Hoya III settle anything?

screws? When they screen him at airports, the X-ray device spews black smoke. Vitali has nearly bankrupted entire national health-care systems. In the U.S., if he even telephones an HMO, they sic the dogs on him. Hospitals award him frequent flyer miles.

As his bout with Peter was announced, Vitali was hedging career bets by simultaneously running for the mayor of Kiev in Ukraine. Let's hope he didn't hurt himself making a campaign speech. But you know what? If I were a citizen there, I'd vote for him. You can't say that about every Robo-fighter that comes off the production line. And if any of the above made you smile, please join me in dedicating that smile to the late genius of George Carlin, a man who made lots of us—me for sure—fall down laughing.

Oscar-Shane II Revisited: What if Shane Mosley hadn't used steroids before his second fight with De La Hoya? Mosley has admitted taking them, though he contends they were administered without his knowledge. The matter is already being contested in two separate civil cases. De La Hoya, now Mosley's partner in Golden Boy Promotions, has no part in these proceedings, but you can bet he's keenly interested.

All three judges scored the sequel 115-113 for Mosley. It was close until steroid-enhanced Sugar Shane won the final rounds over an Oscar who seemed to fade even more in those days than he does lately. If the court system agrees that sinister forces pumped illegal substances into Mosley—with or without his knowledge—the Nevada commission should use its authority to call the fight a no-contest. Look at the felony case against Barry Bonds working its way through the court system as we speak. If the court concludes he used steroids, it's a safe bet his records won't stand. At the very least, Major League Baseball would brand them with an asterisk. Boxing should do no less. It would set an important precedent and be the fairest way to resolve this issue.

But if both codgers insist on continuing their ring careers, De La Hoya and Mosley should definitely do a number three, no matter what happens in those civil cases. The now-cancelled date with Floyd Mayweather had given Oscar reason to get out of bed in the morning, and Mosley-De La Hoya III could do an even better job. When Mayweather withdrew, I felt Oscar's pain. How can he go on enduring great fame, owning a bank account the size of Montana, a successful promotion firm, plus a string of other businesses, and splendid digs in Puerto Rico and who knows where else?

Floyd At 31: I was there when Mayweather announced his retirement in November 2006, minutes after he was finished schooling Carlos Baldomir in Las Vegas. There were more than a hundred media people attending that post-fight press conference, and I doubt more than 20 of us believed him, even though he broke down and cried real tears.

This time it's more credible because he's pulling out of a sequel with De La Hoya that was the biggest money fight out there for him by far and also promised him an easier night than he'd have against maulers like Miguel Cotto, Paul Williams, or Antonio Margarito. But his retirement is still not entirely believable. People, attitudes and circumstances will change as the fight world charges ahead with its fistic business, and Mayweather is one of the more mercurial dudes in the boxing cosmos.

The hot angle for Mayweather-De La Hoya II was going to be Floyd Senior in Oscar's corner trying to help his fighter

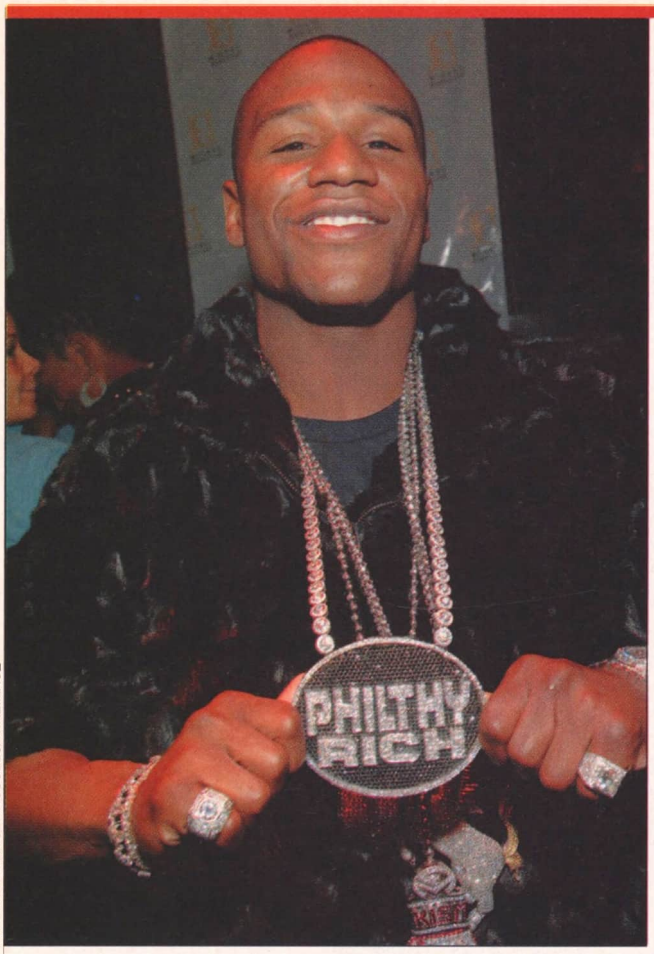


PHOTO BY DENISE TRUSCELO/WIREIMAGE

Can Mayweather's money buy happiness?

kayo his son. That was fascinating, all right, but in a dark, gimmicky way, like something off the old, garbage-strewn *Jerry Springer Show*. Ex-drug dealer Floyd Senior is so screwy he's even threatened his son on camera. I ain't no shrink, but jealous Senior appears to have some kind of morbid, reverse Freudian complex. So, dad-wise, the kid had the worst of both worlds—an absent father who, when he was around, didn't walk out of any Norman Rockwell painting. Junior himself has stayed off the police blotter recently, and we can only hope that as he matures, he'll put the ugly times behind him and help provide his children the kind of secure, happy childhood that wasn't his.

Excessive Evander: We knew that Evander Holyfield was living in a big palace outside Atlanta, but its dimensions weren't widely known until the place almost slipped into foreclosure. The most generally accepted figures are 57,000 square feet holding 109 rooms. Sounds like you could get a couple of supermarkets in there and still have room for a bowling alley. In fact, the place *does* have a bowling alley, though you'd probably get lost trying to find it.

Ed McMahon, whose Beverly Hills home slipped into foreclosure about the same time, was making do with a measly 7,000 square feet. To put Holyfield's residence in perspective for the rest of us, the average U.S. home in 2004 was 2,349 square feet. You could fit 24 of them inside Holyfield's. The White House, at 55,000 square feet, is almost as big as The Real Deal Mansion. But it serves as a home, a museum, and an office complex that is the center of

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Holyfield's mansion: Bigger than the White House

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Both Deandre and Goldman were happy Esteves stopped the fight

U.S. government. If he were planning to manufacture 18-wheelers in there, the amount of floor space would make sense. Otherwise, Evander, you need counseling, man, and not just financial counseling.

Futch: An award to referee Benji Esteves, who pulled the determined, barely known Deandre Latimore away from brave Sechew Powell at precisely the correct moment in round seven, saving Powell from needless punishment.

The terrific, back-and-forth junior middleweight battle on ESPN2 from legendary Times Square was an unexpected treasure. Just when we've lost faith in all those unheralded underdogs who tell us they're going to come out of nowhere, beat the odds, and butt into the contenders' line, one of them comes through and makes us believe again. The non-stop Wednesday night thriller was all the explanation anyone needs for why boxing fans are boxing fans. If only all the $2-million fights were that good.

Yes, Powell tested positive for marijuana afterward. Did that detract from the fight? In a word: no. Marijuana is not a performance-enhancing drug.

NBA In Doghouse: In a New York *Daily News* Internet poll, 91 percent of respondents said they believed disgraced referee Tim Donaghy's claims that NBA executives pressured referees to fix games for selected superstars and to extend playoff series. Now wait just a darn minute! Everybody knows that being suspected of corruption is boxing's job. If the NBA wants in too, it will just have to get in line behind the other also-rans.

And speaking of the NBA, time after time during the Lakers-Celtics championship series, players who looked great out the gate visibly tired as games progressed and lost focus on offense and defense. These guys couldn't possibly be reaching the same levels of endurance training as most world-class fighters, who have the best incentive of all to maintain stamina. They learn it the first time they run out of gas while another fighter is pounding on them.

Ha, Ha, Ha: Can any WBC official say with a straight face that the winner of Andre Berto vs. Miguel Rodriguez is welterweight champ of the world? That was a trick question. There aren't any WBC officials with straight faces. ■

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Beating Rodriguez didn't make Berto champion

[Camera Clicks]

PHOTOS BY JOHN DISANTO

Great Philadelphia fighters have to stick together, and here we see former light heavyweight champ Harold Johnson with middleweight standout Bennie Briscoe (in miniature statue form) at the Veteran Boxers Association Hall of Fame induction on May 18. We never got to see a Johnson-Briscoe fight, unfortunately—they weren't quite the same size and their careers only partially overlapped—but we'll take the 80-year-old Johnson over the 16-inch Briscoe in a close one.

PHOTO BY NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

Bashed Brother: It's been an interesting fall from grace for one-time baseball superstar Jose Canseco, culminating with his 97-second knockout loss to retired football player Vai Sikahema in a "celebrity" boxing match in Atlantic City in July. Ever since that baseball famously doinked off his head for a home run, we've known defense isn't Canseco's strong suit, and here he is eating a clean right hand from Sikahema, who may have given up height, weight, and age, but had the all-important equalizer: He knows how to box.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

The Cubs may be facing the so-called Curse of the Billy Goat, but Chicago athlete David Diaz had an even tougher curse to overcome in June: the Curse of Fighting Manny Pacquiao. The goat got some extra press by urinating during a prefight press conference, a perfectly natural response when Pacquiao's fists are within a few inches of your head.

PHOTO BY TARA YAP/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

You can destroy their homes, but don't deny them their right to watch Manny Pacquiao fight. Just a few days after a typhoon battered the central and northern Philippines, residents of Iloilo in central Philippines gathered around the tube to watch David Diaz get hit by the natural disaster that is "Pac-Man," their spirits lifted for a few minutes, at least. We're going to go out on a limb and guess that the fight didn't cost $50 to see in the Philippines.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

It's a good thing ace boxing photographer Chris Farina doesn't have to make weight. A hungry-looking Farina, jumping to the other side of the lens at a prefight press conference for Kelly Pavlik vs. Gary Lockett held at Gallagher's Steak House in New York, eyes up a few choice cuts of meat. Meanwhile, it's his buddy Marty Rosengarten who's making the money by taking the pictures.

By Joseph Santoliquito

Deandre Latimore Junior Middleweight

Deandre Latimore couldn't believe what he was seeing outside his friend's apartment window. Panic immediately overtook his nerve center, as it would anyone who thinks his car is about to get towed away.

A St. Louis police officer was jotting down the tag number and make of Latimore's car. The tags on the car happened to be his mother's. Not Latimore's. No match for the car. When Latimore approached the police officer, he already knew he was staring at some potential trouble. The cop asked him his name and was surprised by the answer.

"Deandre Latimore, the boxer?" he asked.

"Yes, that's me," replied Latimore, who in 2004 was a distinguished amateur boxer known throughout the area.

After Latimore explained the situation, the police officer proposed a deal. They run six miles together the next morning—*after* taking the car back home and not driving it again until the proper tags were on it. At the time, Latimore was actually fed up with the sport and ready to move on to something else. But he was not about to turn down the gracious offer.

Before Latimore knew it, he was boxing again. And winning. He was out on morning runs and his enthusiasm for boxing was revitalized—all because his car was almost towed one summer afternoon in 2004.

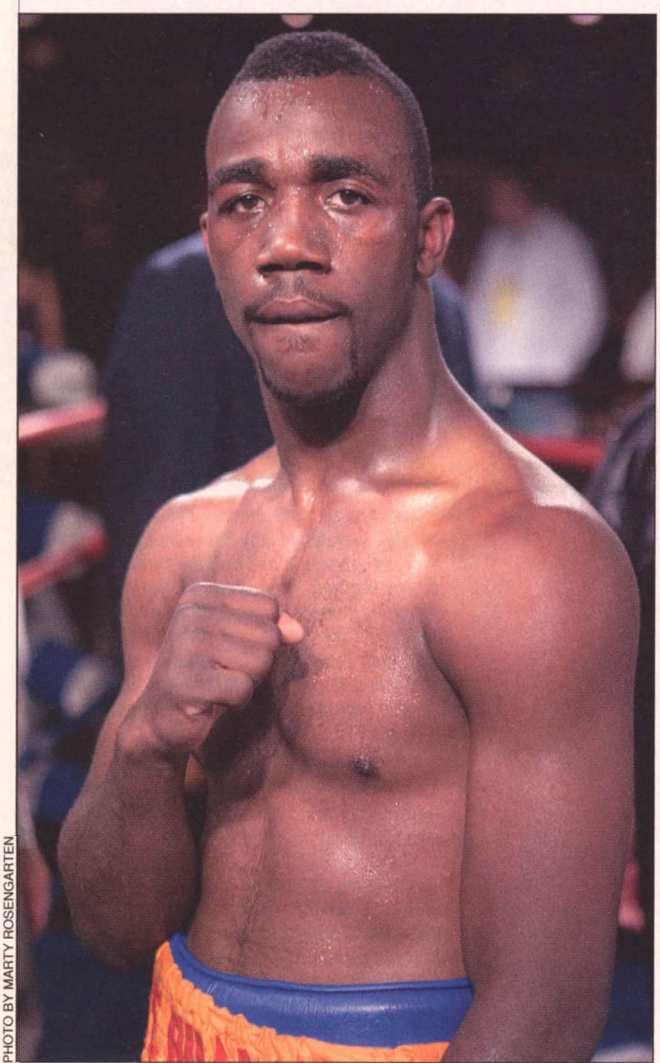


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Pro Record

2006		
Jan. 26	Chris Mickle, St. Charles, MO	KO 1
March 9	Hosea Smith, St. Louis, MO	KO 1
March 23	David Bridges, St. Charles	KO 1
March 31	Wesley Martin, Springfield, MO	KO 2
April 20	Jonathan Bruce, Jefferson City, MO	KO 1
May 5	Reuben Rodriquez, St. Charles	KO 1
June 1	William Deets, St. Louis	W 4
June 22	Charles Walker, Kansas City, MO	KO 1
Aug. 11	Jessie Davis, St. Louis	KO 6
Sept. 21	Rodney Freeman, St. Charles	KO 1
Dec. 2	Leo Laudat, St. Charles	KO 1
2007		
Jan. 25	Ian Gardner, St. Charles	KO by 3
April 18	Damone Wright, Kansas City	W 8
May 11	Brian Paul, St. Louis	KO 2
June 28	Sean Wilson, St. Charles	KO 2
July 14	Rodney Tatum, St. Louis	KO 3
Aug. 3	Mikel Williams, St. Charles	KO 4
Nov. 10	Ed Humes, St. Louis	KO 2
Dec. 6	Durrell Richardson, St. Charles	W 10
2008		
June 11	Sechew Powell, New York, NY	KO 7

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
20	19	1	0	16

Now the 22-year-old, 5'9" junior middleweight from Las Vegas, via St. Louis, Missouri, can laugh at the strange occurrences that led to the biggest victory of his professional career. A natural right-hander who fights southpaw, Latimore is counting on his seventh-round vanquishing of hot prospect Sechew Powell as a flashpoint for further success.

But it wouldn't have happened if Jerry Leyshock, a St. Louis cop who now works Latimore's corner, didn't subtly prod him.

"That was it, that's what got me back into the gym, because I don't think I'd be where I am without running into Jerry that afternoon," Latimore said. "I was pretty down on boxing in '04. I was sick of getting screwed in these national amateur tournaments. I was sick of the scoring and the judges. I wanted out. I saw no future in it. Why do it if you work real hard, sweat your balls off, and get nothing from it? I wasn't getting anything from boxing at the time."

That situation has obviously changed dramatically since Latimore's upset of Powell on ESPN2's *Wednesday Night Fights*, June 11, at the Hard Rock in Times Square, New York City.

Until then, Latimore was a fighter with a Midwest pedigree who had never fought outside of Missouri as a professional. Those types of fighters usually come with a suspicious aura around them, based on dubious opposition. It was a career filled to that point with fights in high school gyms before scant crowds against guys who boxed as a hobby, not as a career.

(Continued on Page 116)

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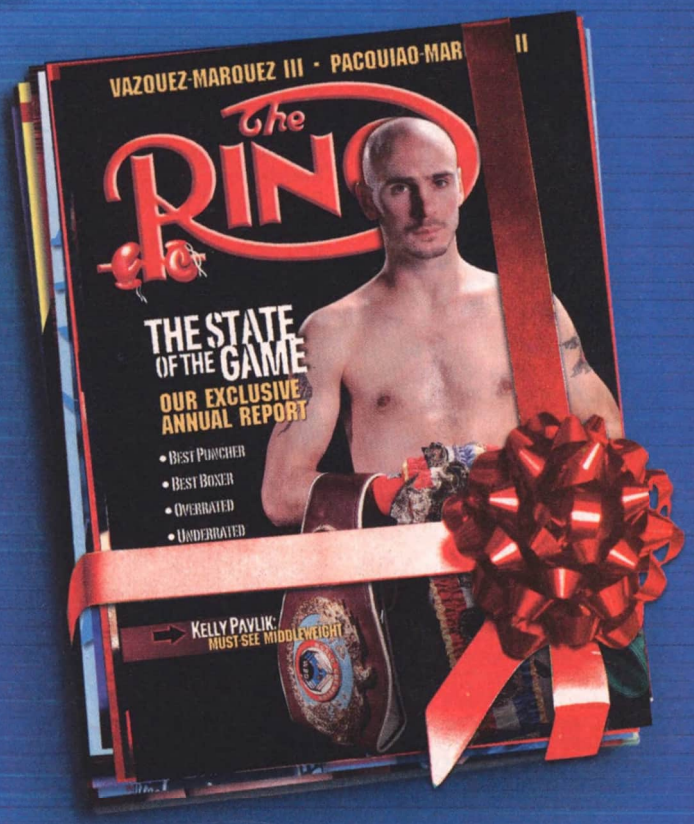

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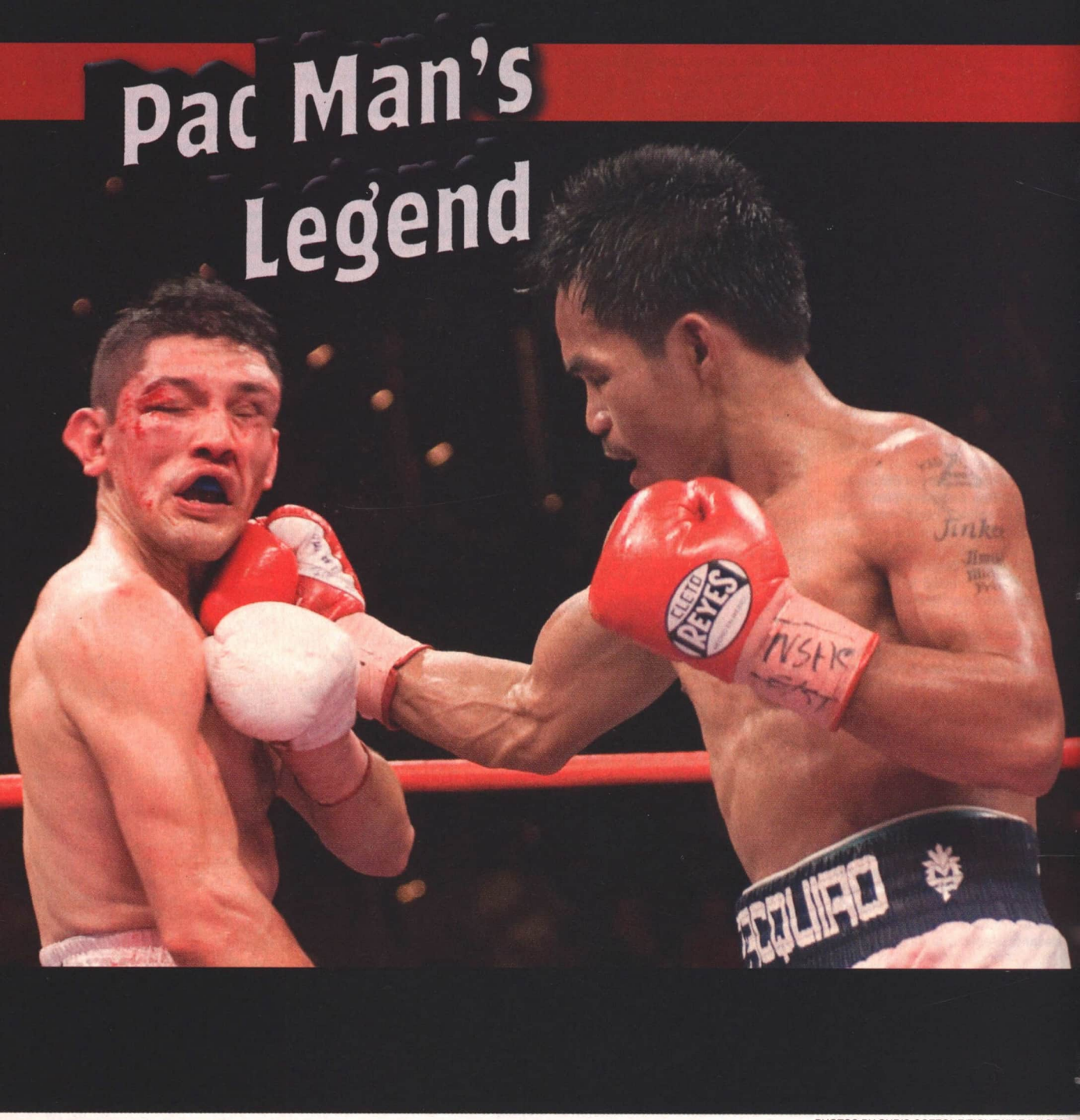
Pac Man's Legend

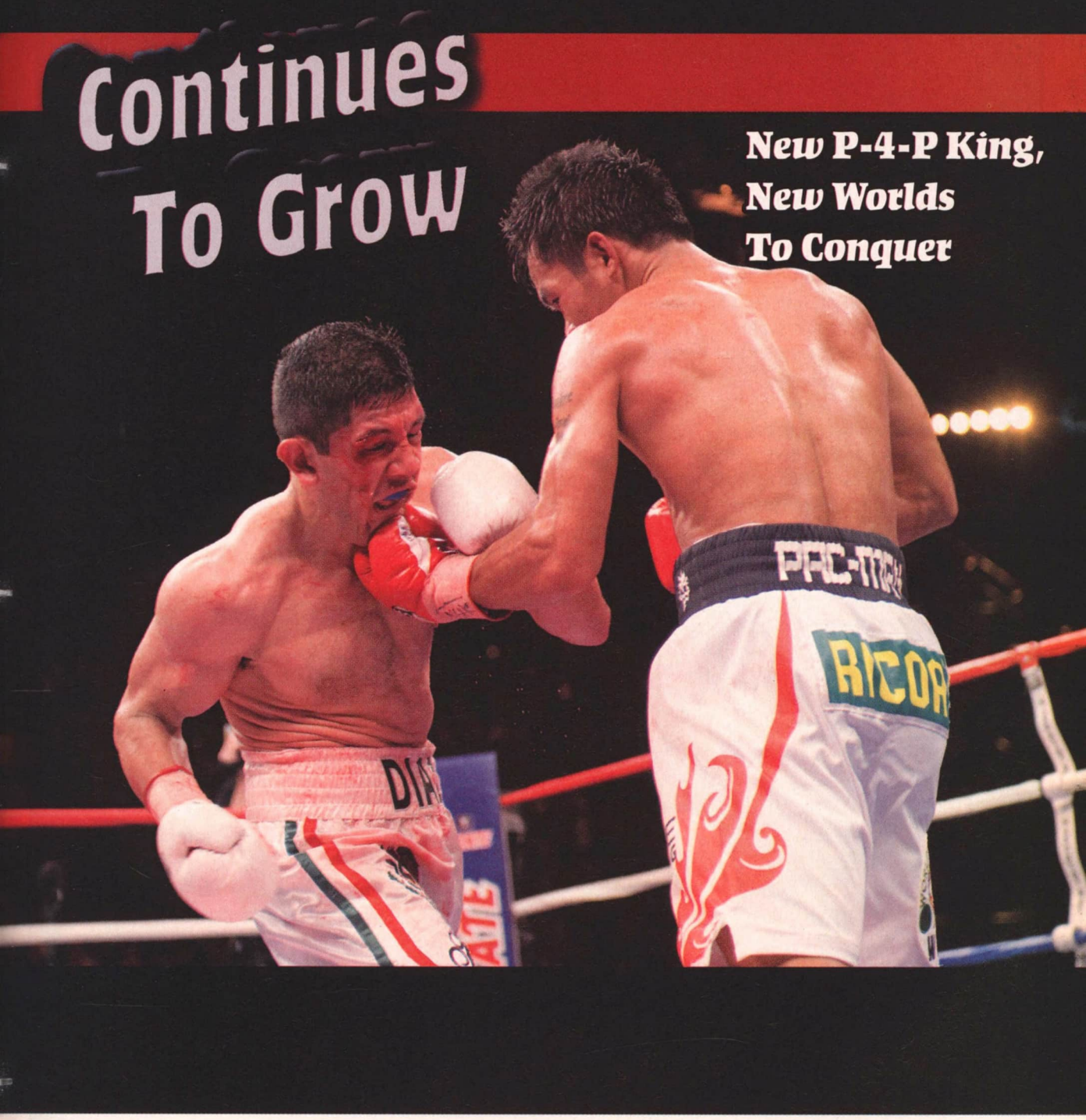


PHOTOS BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

In his lightweight debut, Pacquiao turned in a virtuoso performance, punishing defending titleholder Diaz with both his right (above) and left (opposing right) hands to take the WBC belt with a sensational ninth-round knockout.

Continues To Grow

New P-4-P King, New Worlds To Conquer



By Don Stradley

Ninety years ago, when barefoot boys lined up outside Manila's Olympic Club hoping for a chance to box, they were not thinking about living in opulence, or being pop stars, or using their fame to become political forces. They were only trying to impress Frank Churchill, the Tex Rickard of the Philippines. If the boys were lucky, Churchill would lend them shoes to wear in the ring.

Those boys couldn't fathom someone like Manny Pacquiao. Churchill's thatched roof and bamboo pole

edifice was a universe away from the Mandalay Bay Events Center in Las Vegas, where, on June 28, in front of 8,362 people and an HBO Pay-Per-View audience, Pacquiao pounded David Diaz loose from the WBC lightweight title, becoming the first Asian to win titles in five weight classes, including legitimate world championships at featherweight and junior lightweight, which garnered him a pair of RING magazine belts. If this keeps up, Pacquiao will need to add a new wing to his mansion just for hardware.

The fight ended as so many of Pacquiao's bouts have ended, with his opponent on the canvas. But there were a couple of differences this time. Pacquiao was making his debut at 135, and he was also confirming his new slot at the top of boxing's mythical pound-for-pound list.

If there were still some who, in the wake of Floyd Mayweather's retirement, hedged between Pacquiao and light heavyweight/super middleweight champion Joe Calzaghe as boxing's top pound-for-pound man, Pacquiao's performance put the doubters out of business. Consider that Pacquiao has fought more good fighters in the past three years than Calzaghe has fought in a career, and you can see why Pacquiao has inherited the top position. Also, in a close race for the P-4-P distinction, the deciding factor may as well be which fighter gives you more bang for the buck. In that sense, Pacquiao leaves Calzaghe in a heap, just as he did Diaz.

After thoroughly outboxing Diaz for eight rounds, Pacquiao ended matters in the ninth with a chopping left to the jaw. Diaz fell to his knees, and pitched forward. Referee Vic Drakulich waved the fight off at the 2:24 mark. Pacquiao tried to assist Diaz to his feet, but the poor fellow couldn't be budged. It was if he'd been fastened to the canvas by a giant nail gun.

Pacquiao, 47-3-2 (36), barely had time to wipe the blood from his gloves before the media was asking about his future. While Pac-Man is an iconic international figure with the sort of clout enjoyed by maybe two dozen fighters in the sport's entire history, he reacted with the standard pug's line of *I'm just a fighter. My job is to train and get ready.* Against

PHOTO BY HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

Although he's always had a devastating left, Pacquiao has worked hard to develop his right hand, which, along with his vastly improved footwork, has made him a much more complete fighter. Today, he sits on top of the pound-for-pound ratings, the best fighter in the world.

PHOTO BY HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

Just when it looked like the badly battered Diaz would last the distance, Pacquiao ended the fight with a left to the jaw in the ninth round. The victory confirmed Pac-Man's status at boxing's pound-for-pound best.

Diaz, he demonstrated with a Renoir-like flair that he is blurring the line between fighter and artist.

Diaz is not in boxing's elite class, but he is a durable man who had previously lost only once in 36 professional fights. Round after round Diaz favored the customers with his toughness, swallowing enough right jabs that the insignia on Pacquiao's gloves must have been imprinted on the back of his throat. But just when it seemed Diaz might Tex Cobb his way to a lopsided decision loss, he crumbled. Like Cobb, Diaz kept his sense of humor, giving HBO's Jim Lampley a postfight interview for the ages, dropping a dozen or so good-natured F-bombs, and happily acknowledging Pacquiao's greatness.

"I got tricked by his speed," said Diaz. "I gave it my all. His speed is what sealed it for me. His speed was uncontrollable."

Diaz, 34-2-1 (17) had cuts all about his face, but while he maintained the blood didn't bother him, he said, "I thought he had a knife. It's like he was hitting me with a blade. I thought [Pacquiao trainer Freddie Roach] was in there hitting me too. What can I say? I lost today; I'll win tomorrow. To go like that with a guy like Manny Pacquiao, I think I'm doing pretty good."

Roach has done remarkable work with Pacquiao. He has shorn off Pacquiao's rough edges to the point where every few fights Pacquiao emerges new and improved. As boxing writers filed their reports after Pacquiao beat Diaz, they used words like "breathtaking," "sensational," and "ruthless." Forgotten was the previous speculation that Pacquiao was slowing down.

Against Diaz, Pacquiao was unleashing his right hand as if it was a new power tool that he wanted to show off for his neighbors. He jabbed with it, he hooked with it, and then, as if he wanted to make sure HBO had something for the highlight reel, he ripped a perfect right to the body followed by an uppercut through Diaz' guard. Watching old Mike Tyson tapes, Manny?

It's not as if Pacquiao was ever a bad boxer. Even before he stopped Marco Antonio Barrera in 2003, he showed signs that he was an astute finisher. Emmanuel Lucero tried crouching near the canvas like old Arturo Godoy, but Pacquiao, after eyeing Lucero like an alley cat staring down some strange species of mouse, faked a right and crushed him with a single left hand. Five years later, Pacquiao has added a right hand and some nice footwork. Plus, after beginning his career as an urchin-like junior flyweight, Pacquiao is now a lightweight.

"I had to get him out of the 130-pound class," said Pacquiao's promoter, Bob Arum, although Roach probably had something to do with it. "When he killed himself to make weight and had only one day to replenish, it took the oomph out of him physically. It's like when people said Miguel Cotto had no chin and got tired at 140 pounds. They see a stronger, better Cotto at 147 pounds; it's the same with Manny. Manny is just a great fighter."

Pacquiao concurred that lightweight suits him.

"I feel much, much stronger and more powerful at 135," Pacquiao told the media. "This is where I plan to stay."

Such a statement should freeze

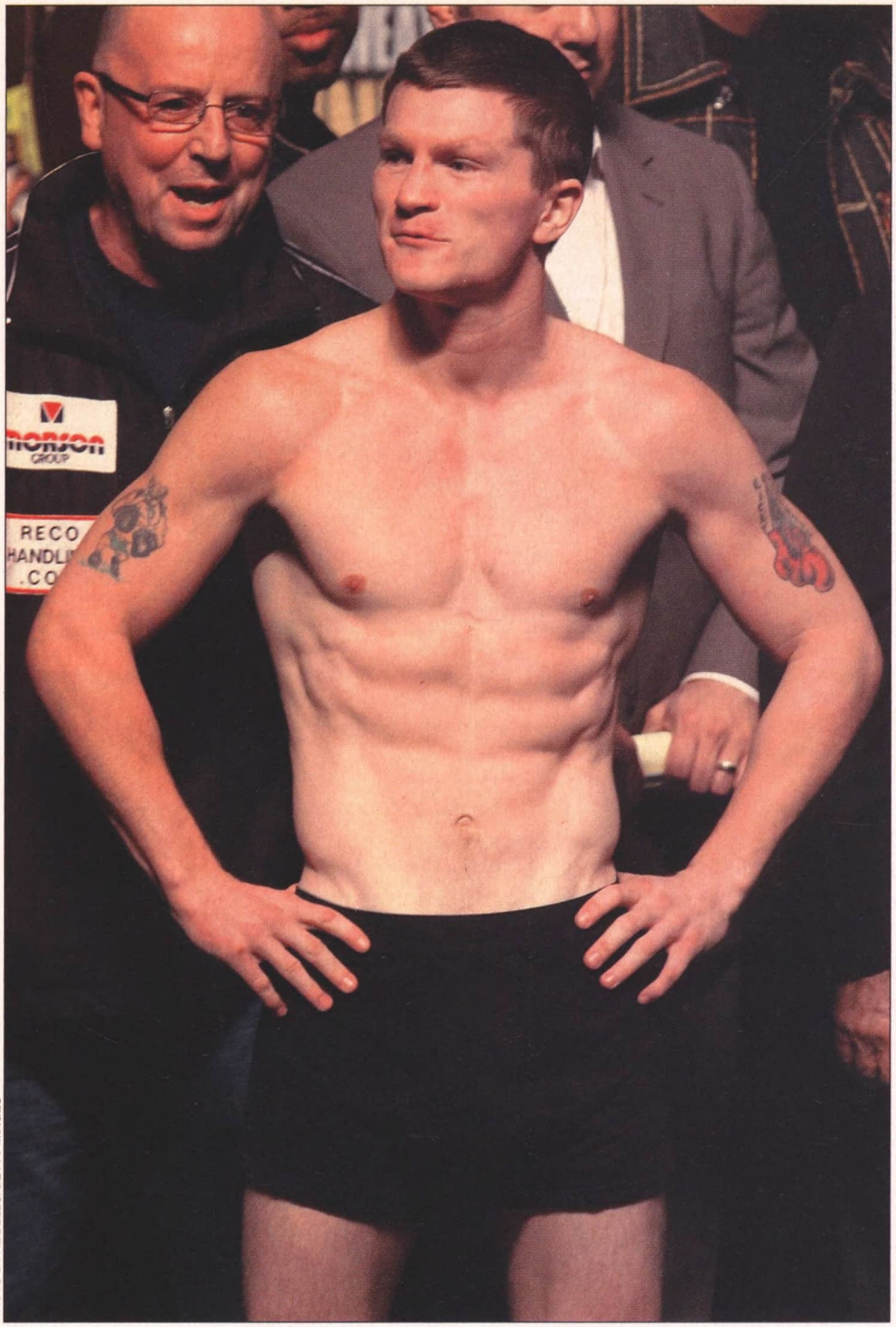


PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Although there are plenty of attractive opponents in the lightweight division, there has already been talk of Pacquiao moving up to fight junior welterweight champion Ricky Hatton (pictured). But Hatton has to get past Paul Malignaggi first.

the hearts of most lightweights, but Pacquiao has become the glittering star everybody wants to fight. Junior welterweights are wondering if they can boil down to 135, and featherweights are wondering if they can pack on a few pounds.

There are several opportunities for Pacquiao at 135, starting with the winner of the September bout between lightweight champion Joel Casamayor and Pacquiao's old rival, Juan Manuel Marquez. Casamayor is a cagey, old southpaw who could give Pacquiao some trouble. Casamayor can go through a revolving door at a supermarket and the door will feel confused and bullied. He's just that crafty.

As for Marquez, well, we've already seen what Marquez does to Pacquiao. A draw and a split decision win for Pacquiao doesn't tell the story. Twice they have fought, and twice they have swooped around each other like eagles trying to take out each other's eyes.

Arum, though, is not convinced a third Pacquiao-Marquez bout will happen.

"Golden Boy [Promotions] has done a stupid thing in putting [Marquez] in with Joel Casamayor," Arum told Boxingconfidential.com. "It's so stupid because Casamayor will stink him out and beat Marquez."

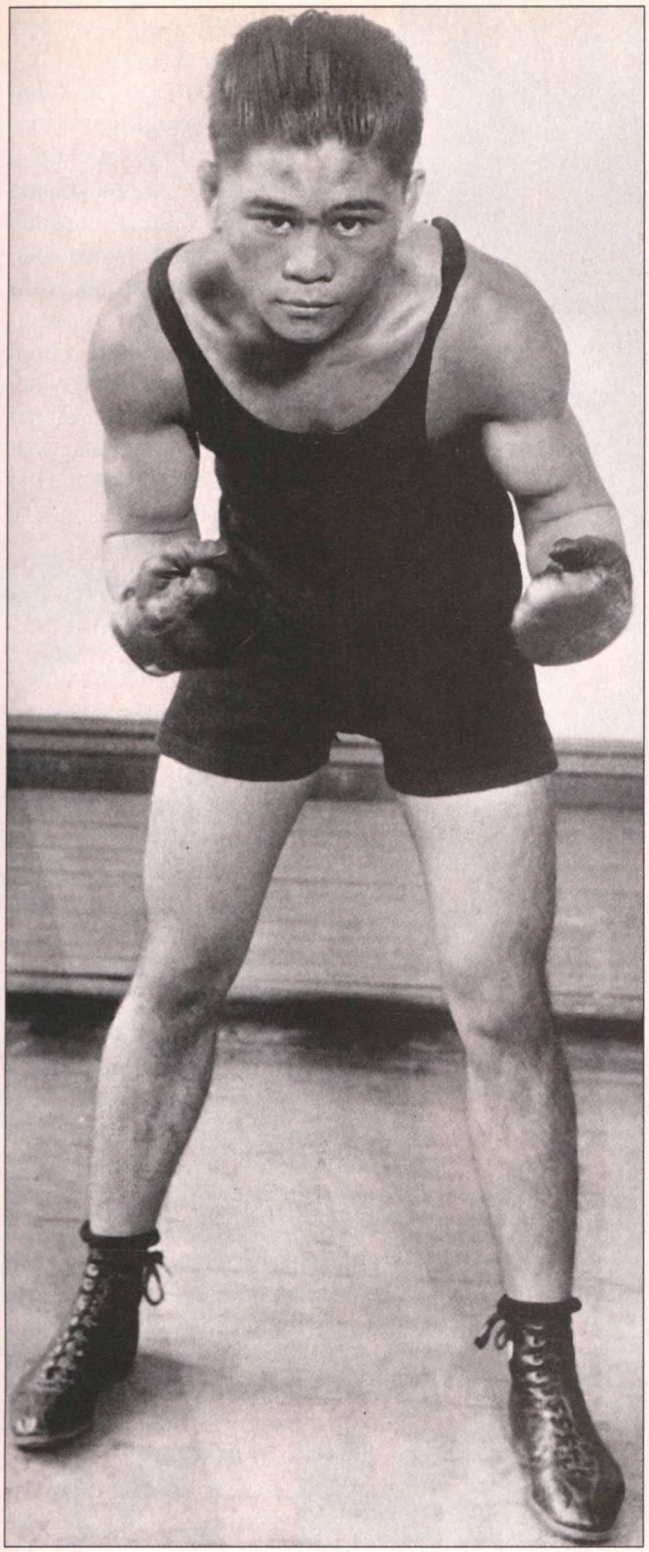
If GBP and Top Rank can get together on the idea, there's a chance Pacquiao and England's Ricky Hatton will meet next year. Arum also mentioned Edwin Valero and Joan Guzman as possibilities for Pacquiao. At press time, Valero was penciled in, but very lightly.

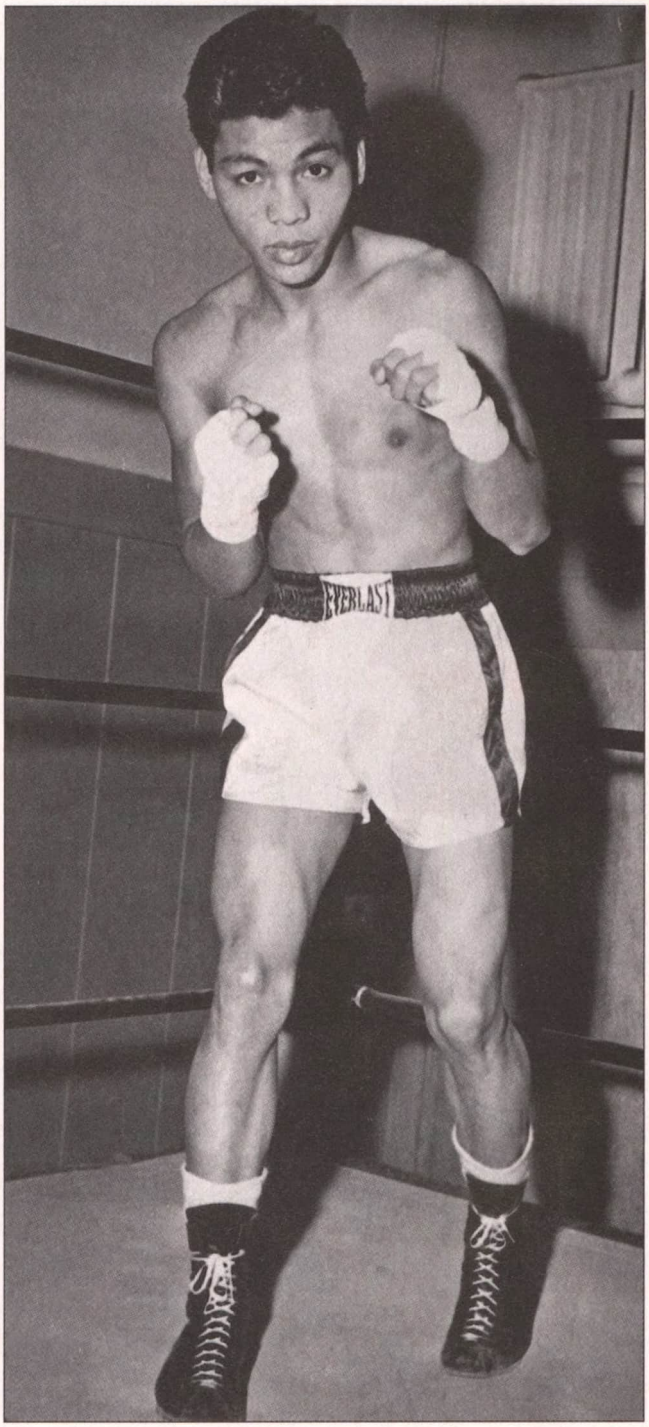
"Next to Manny, I say that Guzman is the toughest guy out there. Casamayor means nothing," said the hyperbolic Arum. "Nate Campbell means nothing. As far as Juan Diaz goes, Manny will pound the s___ out of him. Juan Diaz is a little bit limited and only a slight upgrade from David Diaz."

Weeks before fighting David Diaz, Pacquiao said, "It's very important to me and my country to put my name into boxing history." Pacquiao was referring to winning a lightweight belt. But when Pac-Man retires, alphabet titles may be an insignificant part of his legend.

Since he made his American debut in 2001 on the undercard of the Oscar De La Hoya-Javier Castillejo bout, Pacquiao has opened the door to the Philippines. America is such a self-absorbed country that sometimes it is only through sport that we learn about other parts of the world. Pacquiao is an ambassador. It's a role that other Filipino fighters have had, but none crashed into America with the force of Pacquiao.

During the 1920s, American boxing





Prior to Pacquiao, the two biggest Filipino boxing stars were flyweight champion Pancho Villa (left) and junior lightweight champion Flash Elorde (right). Both men were hugely popular with their countrymen, but Pacquiao is close to eclipsing them.

fans began hearing about the Philippines' first wave of fighters. American servicemen had helped introduce boxing to the islands, and promoter Frank Churchill was at the helm of a Filipino boxing boom. Most Americans remembered the Philippine-American war that had ended 20 years earlier, but now they read tales written in the argot of the day, of "little brown men " boxing for unruly crowds in "converted cock-pits."

So many Filipino fighters invaded the United States, they were nicknamed the "Mosquito Fleet." Pancho Villa was the best of the lot, and his win over Jimmy Wilde for the flyweight championship in 1923 had a profound effect on the islanders. Only 25 years had passed since declaring their independence from Spain, and the Filipinos had a world champion. Villa played his part to the hilt, hiring an orchestra to play while he trained and giving away his silk shirts to bellboys. Surely, there could never be another Villa.

By the 1950s, Gabriel "Flash" Elorde

PHOTO BY HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

Idol in the house: Pacquiao, the Philippines flag waving high above his head, is introduced to the crowd at the Mandalay Bay Event Center prior to the Diaz fight.

was beginning the epic career that would be marked by a seven-year reign as junior lightweight champion. Ted Lerner, THE RING's longtime Philippines correspondent, described Elorde's legacy for HBO.com by saying, "Every Filipino knows of him and reveres him. His story is included in school textbooks. His career and life serves as a basis for comparison of every fighter who has come before and after him, including Manny Pacquiao." Elorde financed a church and an orphanage, and today the Elorde family is still active in boxing and in community work. Surely, there could never be another Elorde.

Pacquiao, though, is living in the era of surreal mass consumerism. He may end up a bigger name than Villa and Elorde combined simply because this wired-up era makes it possible. The rematch with Marquez drew approximately 400,000 pay-per-view buys, a record for a bout below welterweight. He may not have surpassed Villa and Elorde yet, but it seems inevitable. In a way, Pacquiao is a hybrid of the two Hall of Famers—he has Villa's sizzle and Elorde's humanity.

"The kind of popularity that Muhammad Ali and Michael Jordan enjoyed at the peak of their powers in America, that's nothing compared to Pacquiao's popularity in the Philippines," Roach told ESPN.com before the Diaz fight. "He's John, Paul, George, and Ringo rolled into one."

The old concerns that Pacquiao's late nights and wild weekends would lead to his downfall have subsided. It's as if having so many followers keeps him on the straight and narrow. True, Pacquiao may get a little silly in between rounds, staring at the overhead monitors or happily gazing into the audience as if he were a spectator at his own fight. But like the great fighters of the past, Pacquiao answers each bell with a distinct sense of mission, and remains dangerous into the late rounds of a fight. And unlike many reformed brawlers who add more boxing to their style, he's yet to be in a dull fight.

Now, as he reigns at the top of the pound-for-pound list, and may one day be king of all lightweights, Pacquiao looks destined for even greater things than we'd imagined. Even an old-time operator like Frank Churchill would agree. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to THE RING.

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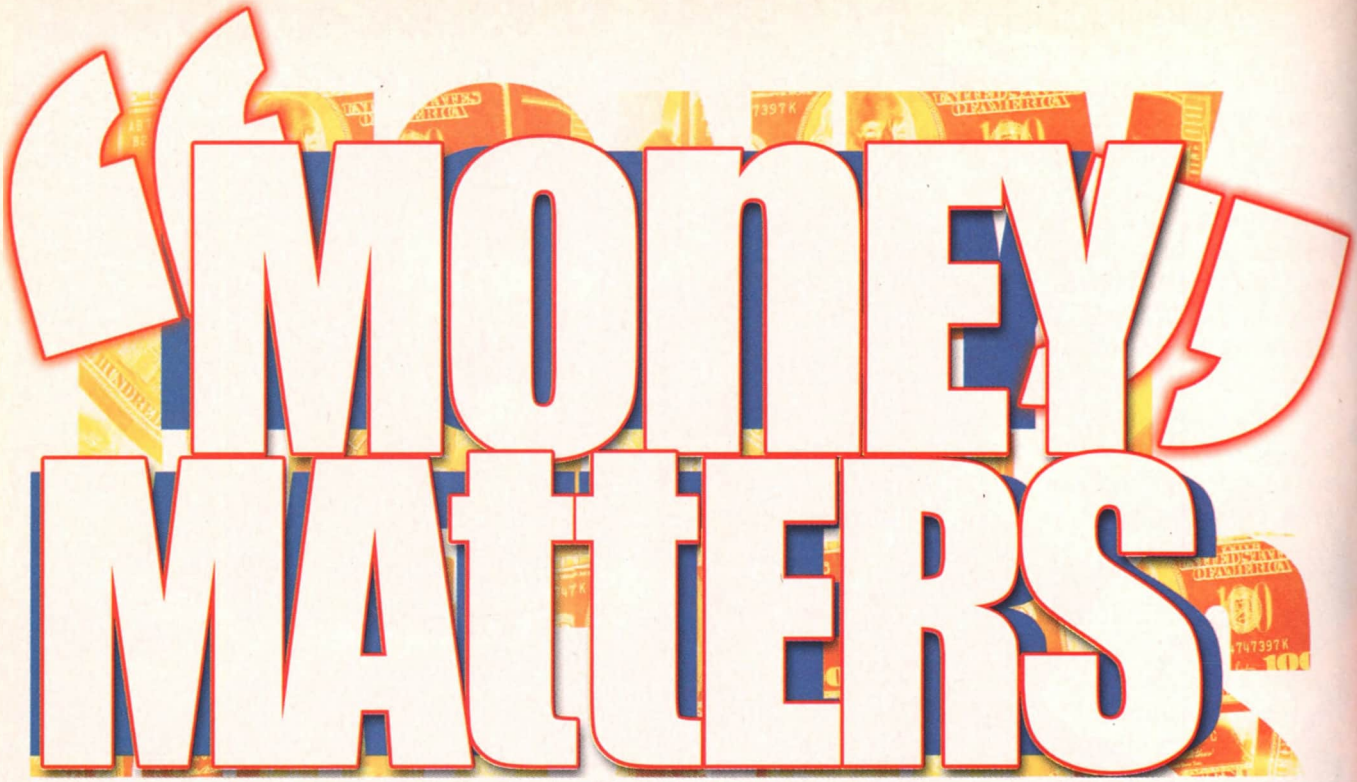


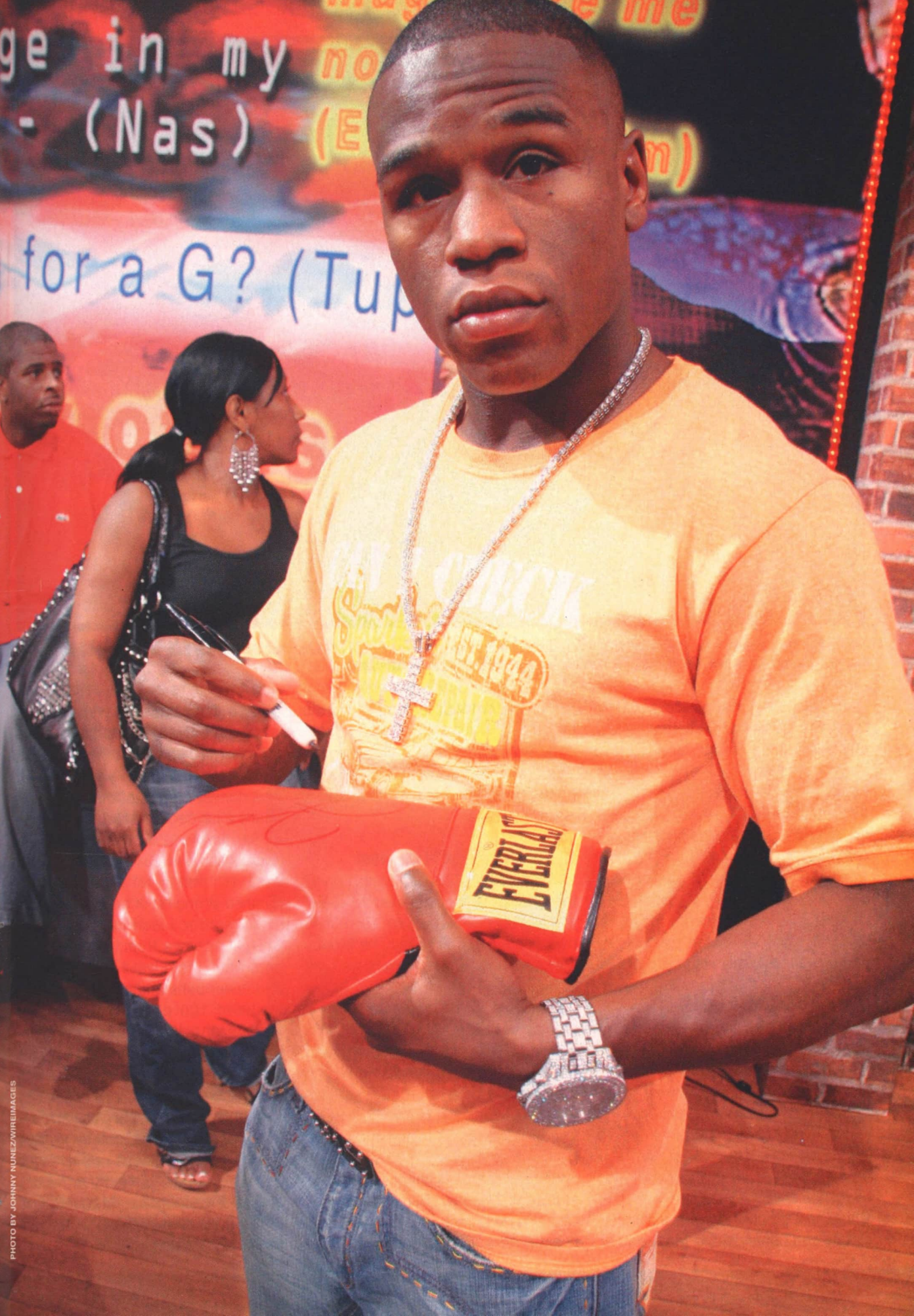
An Analysis Of The Mayweather Retirement From Every Conceivable Angle

By Eric Raskin

Short is the list of men who found boxing's exit-door on their own before the sport rudely kicked them through it. The fight game has plenty of traditions to be celebrated, but the tradition of chewing up and spitting out its competitors is not a proud one. So when a great fighter does say goodbye on his own terms, leaving as a healthy and wealthy man at the top of his game, we should all applaud him.

Why, then, did Floyd Mayweather get little more than a half-hearted golf clap from most of the fans and media when he announced his farewell on June 6? Some of it can be attributed to the fact that he left so much unfinished business, disappointing those who wanted to see the reigning world welterweight champion clean up boxing's hottest and deepest division. But most of it probably comes down to the simple fact that not many people believe Mayweather.

Not only had Mayweather cried wolf twice already, when he expressed a desire to retire after beating Carlos Baldomir in 2006 and when he actually announced a retirement after defeating Oscar De La Hoya in 2007, but there's also more than a century of evidence suggesting that 31-year-old fighters in his position simply are not realistic candidates for permanent retirement.



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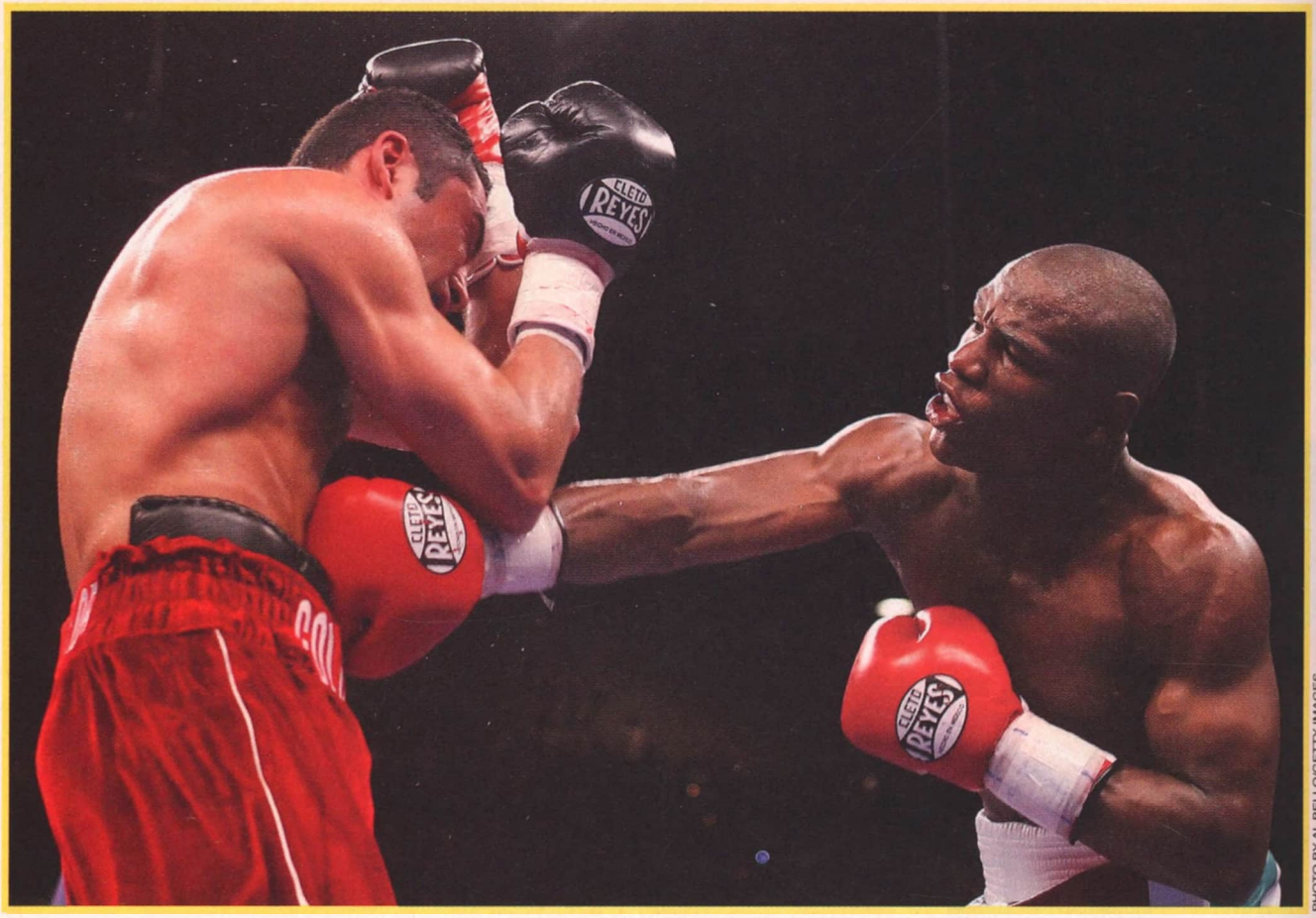


PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Although he has defeated a lot of good fighters, Oscar De La Hoya is the only sure-fire Hall of Famer that Mayweather beat in his 39-bout pro career. It was also the fight that made "Pretty Boy" the superstar he always thought he deserved to be.

On the other hand, Mayweather made his announcement seem more official this time around by offering it in writing, citing a lack of "desire and joy to continue in the sport." And he also notified THE RING, in writing, of his decision to vacate the welterweight championship.

At the very least, it seems that Mayweather sincerely believes he's retired. That doesn't count for much in boxing, but it's a step beyond the pugilists who begin visualizing their returns the moment they step down from the retirement podium.

Ultimately, the question of whether "Money" has cashed his last check for prize fighting remains open-ended until he either returns or reaches an age and physical state where returning is impossible.

For the sake of this article, we'll take Mayweather at his word, but we'll also speculate about possible scenarios in which he'll go back on that word. You simply can't analyze the Mayweather retirement without looking at it from both sides.

All we know for sure is that when the best fighter in the world leaves in his prime, there's a whole lot to analyze. So let's get to it:

Pound-For-Pound Placement

Mayweather has declared himself the greatest fighter who ever lived. But just as they don't let boxers score their own fights, we can't really let Money May's opinions impact where we rank him in history.

Let's assume his career is over. He won belts in five divisions, including RING titles in two (lightweight and welterweight) and clear dominance in a third prior to the return of RING titles (junior lightweight). He won 39 fights without a loss. He defeated one certain Hall of Famer (De La Hoya), three fighters with a slim chance of getting into the Hall (Genaro Hernandez, Diego Corrales, and Jose Luis Castillo), and two fighters with a decent chance (Arturo Gatti and Ricky Hatton). He was on THE RING's pound-for-pound list for nearly 10 years and he reigned as number one for three years. He also was named Fighter of the Year twice, nearly a full decade apart.

Say what you want about whom he ducked and how dull some of his fights were, but that is, for the most part, a damned strong list of credentials.

It's hard to judge modern fighters against fighters from, say, 60 years ago, when there were fewer divisions and fewer belts and careers routinely included 100 or more fights. Still, Mayweather's ability to continue legitimately ruling at different weights from 130 to 147 pounds puts him somewhere in the vicinity of the Ray Leonards and the Tony Canzoneris in terms of his success across multiple weight classes. It does not, however, make him a peer of Henry Armstrong or Bob Fitzsimmons, who both won undisputed titles in three of the old-school eight divisions.

As for the undefeated element of his record, it's a rare accomplishment. Among Hall of Famers in the "Modern" category, only Rocky Marciano, Ricardo Lopez, and Laszlo Papp can make the same claim. But how much is that zero on the end really worth? Papp, who had an abbreviated career thanks to the interference of the Hungarian government, isn't ranked on anyone's all-time top 100 P-4-P. And on any reasonable list, Marciano is rated no higher than the third-best heavyweight of all-time. Being undefeated tends to leave more questions than answers.

The big problem with Mayweather's resume is with the quality of opposition. He fought only one sure-fire Hall of Famer, and you can't say he came along at the wrong time; a fight against Kostya Tszyu could have been pursued, and fights against HOF maybes like Joel Casamayor and Miguel Cotto never came to fruition. We'll delve into this more later in the "What Could Have Been" section, but suffice to say that Mayweather is not Leonard or Marvin Hagler or Sugar Ray Robinson or Archie Moore in terms of the number of legends he fought.

It's certainly easier to pinpoint where Mayweather stands among his contemporaries than it is to place him in the wider historical context. So let's start with just the last two decades. Among fighters who entered their primes between 1988 and now, Mayweather belongs somewhere in the top seven, along with Evander Holyfield, Julio Cesar Chavez, Pernell Whitaker, Ricardo Lopez, Roy Jones, and Bernard Hopkins. It's interesting to note that Chavez, Whitaker, and Jones were all undefeated in their primes (not counting "Sweet Pea's" ridiculous decision loss to Jose Luis Ramirez and Jones' DQ against Montell Griffin), and the only difference between them and Mayweather is that those greats stuck around too long. Lopez, like Mayweather, got out before he absolutely needed to.

All things considered, we'd say Mayweather belongs somewhere in the bottom half of that group. He's probably

Get To Know The Mayweathers

Floyd Mayweather is a colorful character, but he's nothing compared to some of his relatives:

Floyd Sr.: As a 1970s welterweight contender who fought Sugar Ray Leonard, "Big Floyd" didn't leave a lasting mark on the sport. As a bad-poetry-reciting, bad-dreadlock-growing trainer in the new millennium, Mayweather has become one of the most hilarious (intentionally or not) wackjobs in the fight game, as well as one of the most sought-after trainers in the world. And get this: He found out in '07 that teenaged amateur sensation Justin Jones is his son, and they subsequently began training together. The Mayweather clan keeps growing …

Roger: The best of the fighting Mayweather brothers (he won titles in two divisions), Uncle Roger has been Pretty Boy's trainer most of his pro career. He called himself "The Black Mamba" long before Kobe Bryant tried to, he was jailed briefly for committing battery against the maternal grandmother of his infant son, and he reached a new level of YouTube-era fame with his *Mayweather-Hatton 24/7* Thanksgiving shopping trip in which he loaded up on potato chips and Gatorade.

Jeff: The least talented of the fighting brothers (his claim to fame is a 1993 loss to De La Hoya), Uncle Jeff is also the least interesting personality, by far. In a word, he's sane. And what fun is that? He also went to college. Booooring. He did, at least, pick up a nice payday training Steve Forbes to fight De La Hoya in '08, after Little Floyd made Uncle Roger give up the gig.

Bernice: The matriarch of the madcap Mayweathers, and we may be able to point our finger at Pretty Boy's grandmother and credit her with passing the crazy gene along to the rest of the gang. Her kooky career highlight came after Floyd Jr.'s 1999 win over Justin Juuko, when she climbed into the ring, hyperventilated, and collapsed in the corner, requiring oxygen from the EMTs on hand.

—ER

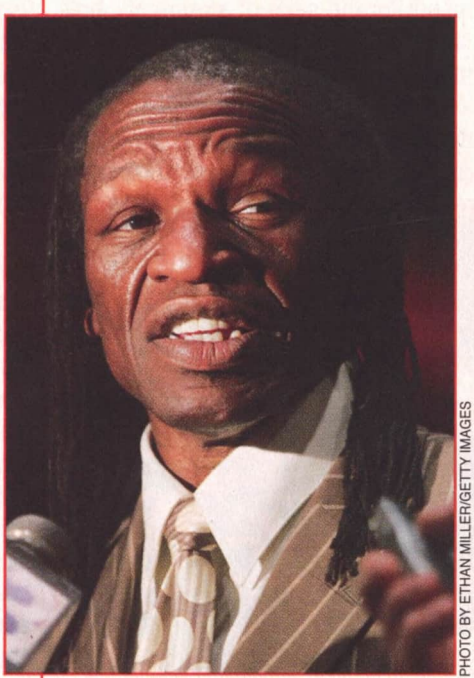


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Big Floyd prior to cutting his dreadlocks

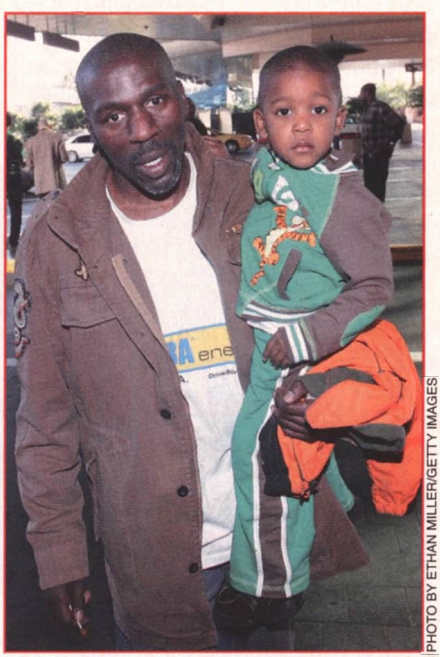


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Uncle Roger with his son, Lehkel

The Desert Island Mayweather DVD

Floyd's fights are not exactly burning up the Internet upload/download/trade scene, but a few of his bouts are worth re-watching. Here are the five we'd pick for our desert island DVD:

KO 2 Angel Manfredy, December 19, 1998: Quick but explosive, this surprising blowout opened our eyes to Mayweather's potential to rule the pound-for-pound list.

KO 9 Emanuel Burton, October 21, 2000: Probably Pretty Boy's most physically taxing fight, as he chose to stand and trade with the game Burton on *KO Nation* and ended up with a bloody nose.

KO 10 Diego Corrales, January 20, 2001: A perfect performance against an A-level opponent, this is the fight you show people to illustrate just how talented Mayweather was.

W 12 Jose Luis Castillo, April 20, 2002: Not a great fight, but close, competitive, and intriguing for the blueprint Castillo laid out on how to beat Mayweather.

KO 10 Ricky Hatton, December 8, 2007: The first several rounds were ugly, but this one's worth having just for the highlight reel "check-hook" that dropped Hatton in the 10th.

—ER

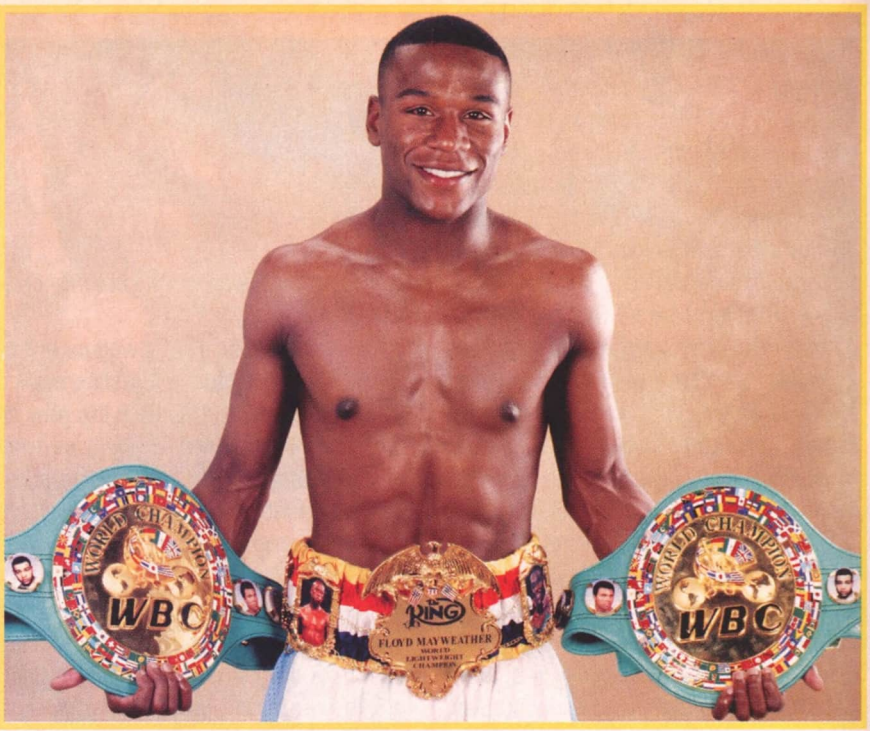


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

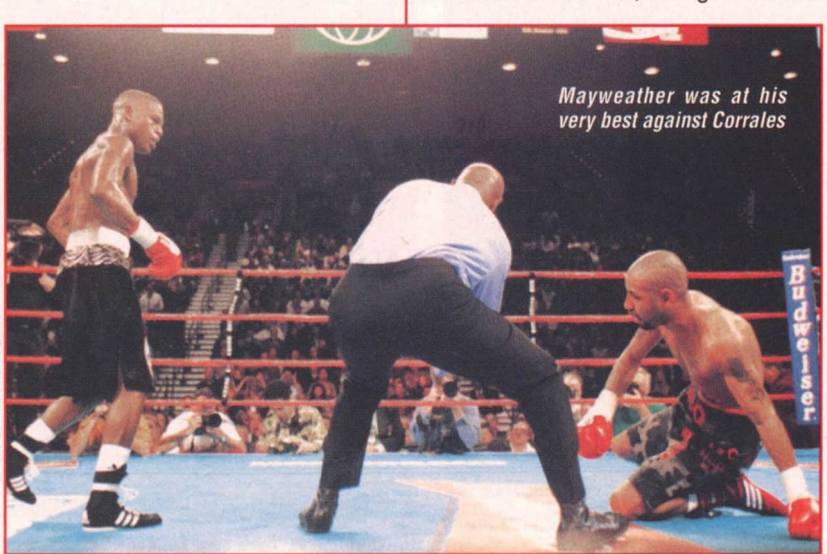
Mayweather was the legitimate, lineal lightweight champion, but didn't really stay in the division long enough to compile a record that would place him among the greatest 135-pounders in boxing history.

ahead of Lopez, who generally fought weaker comp than Mayweather did, and maybe he's ahead of one or two other names on the list, depending on what you like. So if he's between number four and number seven of the last 20 years, where does he fall over the last 120 years? Assuming equality across all eras (a dicey assumption, but let's use it for the sake of argument), he's somewhere between number 19 and number 42 of all-time.

That's not very scientific, we realize. But it's a starting point.

Let's be honest, though: The talent pools *were* deeper in some of those bygone eras, particularly from the '40s through the '80s. We can almost certainly agree that Mayweather doesn't belong in the top 10, hallowed ground reserved for names like Robinson, Armstrong, Ali, Louis, Pep, Greb, etc. And the opinion here is that, for all of his remarkable talent, his body of work isn't quite enough to crack the top 25 either. Looking at that 19-42 range, the upper end just doesn't seem right, given the talent pools of the past.

So our final declaration is this: If Mayweather never fights again, he ranks somewhere in the second 25 in boxing history, pound-for-pound, taking into account both his ability and his accomplishment. "Pretty Boy" and his devoted fans may not be happy to hear it, and the Floyd haters probably won't like it either, but that's where he belongs.



Mayweather was at his very best against Corrales

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Divisional Distinctions

Mayweather won titles of one fabric or another in five divisions, and if his career is indeed over, now's the time to start wondering where he ranks among the all-time greats in each of those classes. Let's take them one-by-one:

Junior Lightweight: This is where Mayweather was at his very best and

reigned the longest (3½ years). He was close to unbeatable at 130 pounds, and this is the one division in which he did enough work to garner consideration as possibly the best ever. Pretty Boy was 9-0 (6) in title fights, beating top-tier opponents such as Hernandez, Angel Manfredy, Corrales, and Jesus Chavez. In fact, he stopped all four of those fighters, and didn't lose more than a couple of rounds along the way. Mayweather was utterly dominant at junior light, and it isn't blasphemy to mention his name alongside Chavez, Alexis Arguello, and Sandy Saddler. In fact, Mayweather's reign is almost identical to those of Chavez and Arguello in terms of length, defenses, and quality of opposition. Great as Saddler was, he didn't defend the 130-pound belt much. So it's fair to place Floyd in the top three of all-time.

Lightweight: The good news: Mayweather was the legitimate, lineal lightweight champion of the world. The bad news: Everything else. His title-winning decision over Castillo was highly controversial, with the Mexican clearly in charge in the later rounds. Mayweather was better in the rematch—or perhaps Castillo was worse—and Pretty Boy won a close, non-controversial decision. Then he made defenses against the ordinary duo of Victoriano Sosa and Philip Ndou and moved on up to junior welter. At lightweight, a division with a tremendous history, Mayweather doesn't sniff the top 20.

Junior Welterweight: Mayweather fought about as well as you could want him to at 140 pounds—there were no close shaves as against Castillo—but he didn't fight the real champion (Tszyu) and he didn't stay long. He decisioned quality contender DeMarcus Corley, beat up on unqualified Henry Bruseles, and claimed a de-valued alphabet belt by butchering Gatti. Even in a bastard division with a spotty history, Mayweather doesn't sniff the top 20.

Welterweight: Of all the divisions Mayweather stopped in, 147 pounds is the one most likely to stir up debate. He arrived with an easy win over Sharmba Mitchell. Right after Zab Judah lost the legitimate title to Baldomir, Mayweather defeated Judah for a bogus alphabet strap. To quiet the critics who refused to call him champ, Mayweather then dominated Baldomir. And in his final fight at welterweight, he turned back junior welter champ Hatton. Considering he had only four fights at the weight, it's a decent resume, in terms of name opposition and claiming the true title. But what that record is doesn't show is all of the more dangerous opponents Floyd *didn't* fight, like Cotto, Antonio Margarito, Paul Williams, and Shane Mosley. Welterweight has a great history, and Mayweather can sniff the top 20 if he likes, but he doesn't crack it. Just looking at the last 15 years, Whitaker, De La Hoya, Mosley, and Felix Trinidad all accomplished more at 147.

Junior Middleweight: Mayweather had one fight here, winning a fairly insignificant alphabet belt from De La Hoya via narrow decision, and that was it. The fight made more money than any other in history, but it didn't make Money more historically significant. In the all-time 154-pound rankings, even the likes of Keith Mullings and Oscar Albarado should feel safe that Mayweather didn't bump them down a spot.

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

It's difficult to know whether Mayweather's gangsta persona ultimately helped or hindered his career. It seemed a handicap to mainstream appeal throughout most of his career, but by the time the De La Hoya and Ricky Hatton fights happened, it was pretty much accepted as part of his image.

What Could Have Been ...

Maybe it isn't fair to second-guess someone who achieved as much as Mayweather, made as much money as Mayweather, and never lost a fight. But that won't stop us—not when we can look at his 11-year pro career and see ways he could have achieved more, possibly made more money, and quite realistically still not have lost a fight.

The notion of Mayweather "under-achieving" begins with a point very early in his career, when promoter Bob Arum wanted to mold him into the next Sugar Ray Leonard, an uber-talented Olympian with a glowing smile who would charm the money right out of everyone's pockets. Pretty Boy Floyd, however, didn't want to play the part. He viewed himself as something of a "gangsta," believing he had to be egomaniacal and thuggish to earn credibility among his hip-hop generation peers.

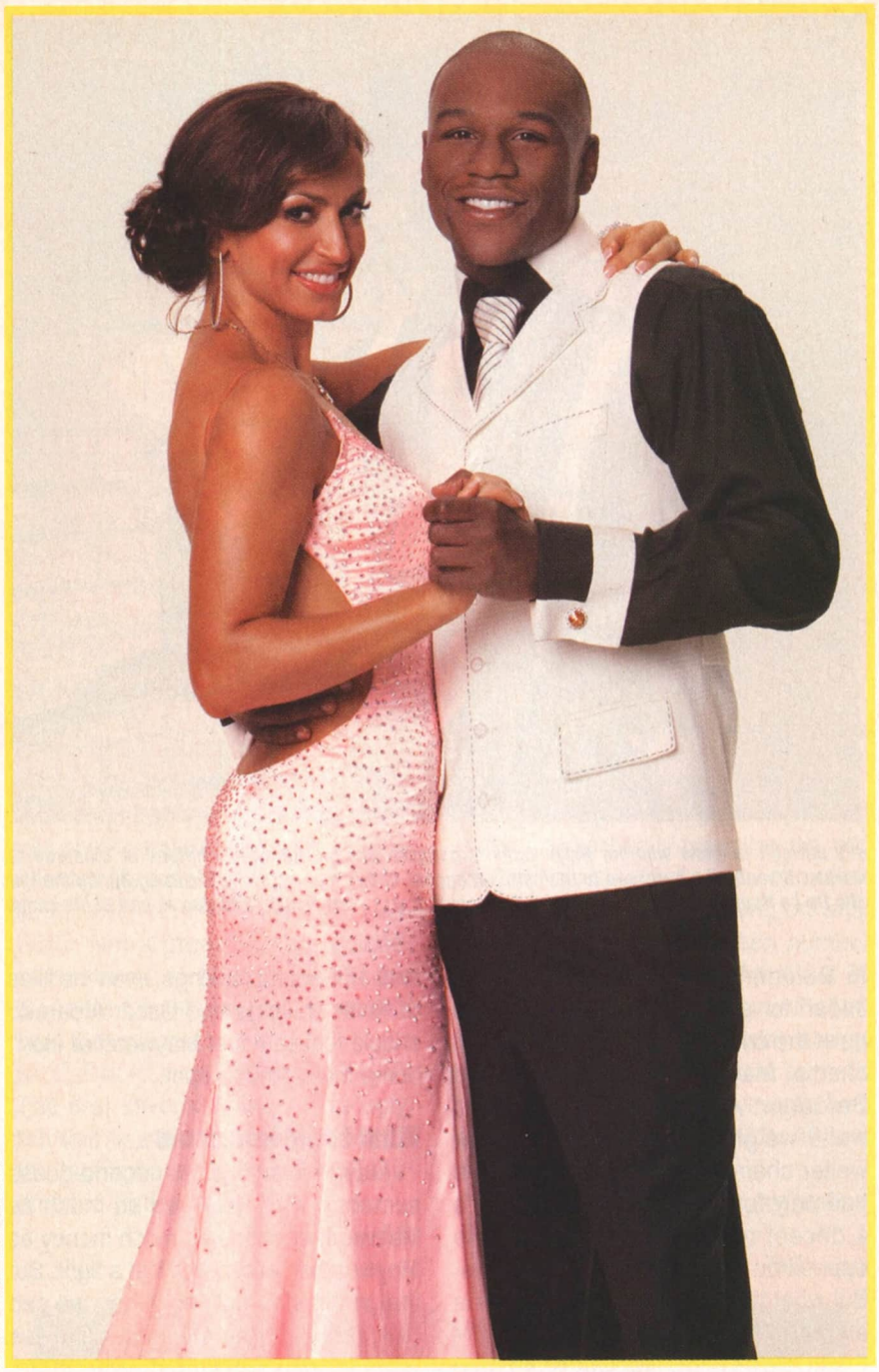


PHOTO BY CAROL KAELSON/ABC

Mayweather and* Dancing With The Stars *partner Karina Smirnoff. Pretty Boy's appearance on the popular TV show introduced him to millions of non-boxing fans and helped make him one of the very few fighters with mainstream appeal.

Mayweather was going to stay true to himself, and if that meant turning off potential fans, so be it. He infamously referred to HBO's long-term contract offer in 1999 as "slave wages." He created a rift with his father, Floyd Sr., when he dumped him as his manager (and kicked him out of the house) and replaced him with rap mogul James Prince. He faced accusations of beating women and was allegedly involved in at least one violent nightclub incident.

Ray Leonard, of course, was no saint—he could be egotistical himself, and he admitted to using cocaine in the '80s. But compared to Mayweather, his image was squeaky clean. Had Pretty Boy attempted to follow that path, Madison Avenue might have embraced him and he might have developed into a real ticket-selling A-side.

Credit must be given to Mayweather, however, for at least becoming a monstrous attraction as a B-side. A "good guy" vs. "bad guy" bout can often outsell two good guys clashing, and that's what we saw when De La Hoya and Mayweather produced roughly $150-million together (Floyd made about $25-mil), not to mention when Mayweather vs. Hatton and Mayweather vs. Gatti both did nicely on pay-per-view. Maybe Mayweather could have been a bigger earner for a longer time if he'd kept Mr. Hyde hidden, but in the final year before his retirement, he was one of the top five highest-earning athletes in the world. Whether his 2007 paychecks made up for what he could have earned over the previous six or seven years by being Sugar-y sweet is something we'll never know for sure.

The in-the-ring "what could have beens" are a little easier to assess. There's very little to criticize from Mayweather's 130- and 135-pound days, except *maybe* that he could have fought Casamayor or Acelino Freitas. But that's nitpicking a guy who more or less cleaned out those divisions.

At junior welter, however, Mayweather missed a major opportunity to add another legitimate world championship. He rode the pine for a full year between the Corley and Bruseles fights, and then chose to fight Gatti rather than undisputed champ and pound-for-pounder Tszyu. Knowing what we know now, Mayweather would have to be regarded as a likely winner over Tszyu in 2005. Instead, Hatton got to Tszyu first. Still, Mayweather could have challenged Hatton soon thereafter to upgrade from "beltholder" to "champion" (and we all know who would have won), but he didn't.

The Floyd Void

Few recent athletes divided their sport's fan base the way Mayweather did. Some fans loved him and defended his every move; others hated him and refused to give him respect. There were relatively few fans left in that middle ground.

It figures, then, that Mayweather will be sorely missed by some fight fans and wished good riddance by others.

Here are three reasons he will be missed:

The pound-for-pound list just got weaker: You remove the number-one

guy, slide everyone else up a slot, and it can't possibly look as strong. Not to mention, Mayweather was a nearly unanimous P-4-P king. With him gone, opinions are mixed as to whether Manny Pacquiao or Joe Calzaghe belongs on top, and, in a sense, that's like having a vacant title.

A welterweight dream match just disappeared: Mayweather vs. the Cotto-Margarito winner would have made a lot of fans, both hardcore and mainstream, happy, and would have been that rarest of Mayweather fights—one where he isn't an overwhelming favorite.

He'd crossed over and become a household name: After a decade of being a fighter only boxing fans knew about, Mayweather finally emerged as someone the *SportsCenter* watchers could discuss somewhat intelligently. Fighting De La Hoya was what propelled him, and Money built on that shrewdly by appearing on *Dancing With The Stars* and becoming a central figure in WWE storylines for a few weeks. Boxing needs stars like that, and here the sport lost one almost as soon as he'd arrived.

And here are three reasons Mayweather won't be missed:

The welterweight title won't be frozen any longer: It wasn't fair to Cotto, Margarito, Williams, or the fans to have a lineal welterweight champion who was only interested in over-the-weight fights and defenses against natural 140-pounders. It's better to have a vacancy, which it's safe to assume will be filled soon based on how willing Cotto, Margarito, and Williams are to fight anyone, anytime.

Real fight fans didn't want to see the De La Hoya rematch anyway: All of the hardcores complained that this fight was nothing but a business transaction. It would have made a lot of money, but the only way the fight would have been worth 55 or 60 bucks was if Oscar could have fought the entire rematch as he had in the first half of the original. Floyd Mayweather, however, is not Stevie Forbes. A great fight—even a good one—was anything but a certainty.

The Five Wackiest Mayweather Moments

Even if he's not as nutty as some of his relatives, Mayweather has had his share of memorable (for better or for worse) moments:

The Tonight Show Appearance: While interviewed by Jay Leno on May 7, 2000, Floyd joked that his dad "just needs a hug" and "everyone should just hug my father"—after Junior booted him from the house. Who needs Dr. Phil when we have a sensitive soul like Little Floyd to dispense therapeutic wisdom?

The Mayweathers vs. The Judahs: Really, Pretty Boy is the only innocent party here, but his reaction to a Zab Judah low blow provoked an in-ring melee that turned an intriguing boxing match into a scary/funny meltdown. The question is this: Was Floyd well-behaved because he's more mature than the rest of the offenders, or was he just too incapacitated from the low blow to throw down?

The Mother-#&%@! Freestyle Rap: In the midst of his breakout 2007 year, footage of Mayweather freestyling in the studio circulated, and this just happened to be the "Stairway To Heaven" of offensive, gay-bashing, profanity-laced improvisational songs. Now we know where the "Philthy" in Philthy Rich Records comes from.

The Perfect Segway: One of the highlights, and certainly the most surreal scene, from *De La Hoya-Mayweather 24/7* was Money May and rapper 50-Cent cruising around Mayweather's house on Segways. We hear there's similar footage out there of Sonny Liston and Johnny Mathis on unicycles from back in the day.

The Big Show's Busted Beak: It was a scripted scene gone awry when Mayweather made his WWE debut in February '08 and broke Paul "The Big Show" Wight's nose with a punch. Not only was this accident more entertaining than anything that happened intentionally during the Mayweather-Show "feud," but watching Team Mayweather scamper away from the angry 440-pounder made for outstanding Keystone Cops-style comedy.

—ER

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

The free-for-all that broke out in the 10th round of the Mayweather-Zab Judah fight

His fights weren't all that entertaining: That's not to say they were necessarily all boring, but in 39 pro bouts Mayweather didn't have a single one that warranted even the slightest Fight of the Year consideration. Some may miss his artistry. But fans of true two-way action aren't shedding a tear.

Comebacks & Crystal Balls

Okay, now for the part where we stop pretending Mayweather's career is actually over. For many, the question is not *if* he'll un-retire, but when, why, and against whom. So here are three possible scenarios:

Scenario 1: There's a school of thought among the skeptics and conspiracy theorists that the driving force behind Pretty Boy Floyd's retirement was to screw his dad out of a massive payday working in Oscar's corner. Others think his retirement was just an attempt to gain an upper hand in the negotiations with De La Hoya and ultimately increase his piece of the pie. If there's any truth to either of those threads, and Mayweather really had no intention of stepping away, then he could be back quite soon.

In fact, a return before the end of '08 isn't impossible. If he really wants in on the action, the attention heaped upon the winner of the July 26 Cotto-Margarito fight will inspire him and Floyd will be calling that fighter out. A full year off will have done wonders for Mayweather's aching bones, so a December superfight, 12 months after his win over Hatton, sounds about right.

Perhaps the best thing about this scenario: The lively debate that will ensue between Mayweather and Brian Kenny when Money insists he's entering the ring as the champion, despite what he said in June in his letter to THE RING.

Scenario 2: It's the summer of 2010. Mayweather hasn't fought in 2½ years. Miguel Cotto is the undisputed junior middleweight champion of the world and, just as importantly, he's universally recognized as the pound-for-pound king. In 2008, the reward didn't equal the risk for Mayweather, who felt Cotto lacked the mainstream star power to make the fight worth his while. But by 2010, along with junior welter champ Amir Khan and new heavyweight titlist Chris Arreola, Cotto is one of the three biggest ticketsellers in the sport.

It's the former pound-for-pound king against the reigning ruler, both undefeated, and with all the intrigue over what Mayweather has left at age 33 after a lengthy absence, the money men behind the fight are able to guarantee Mayweather even more than he would have made for the De La Hoya rematch. Add in the fact that Money May has spent two years listening to fans and experts telling him he ducked Cotto, and is there any conceivable way he turns down this offer?

As long as Cotto hasn't hired Floyd Sr. to work his corner by then, this is a dream comeback scenario for Pretty Boy.

Scenario 3: Wouldn't it be something if, as of 2013, Mayweather has proven the doubters wrong, stayed retired, and just gained induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame?

And wouldn't it be sad if, a few years later, he finally went back on his word long after people stopped caring? Just this past June, we saw two already-inducted Hall of Famers fight when forty-somethings Jeff Fenech and Azumah Nelson traded punches for a third time. Well, how does a 2017 battle between a 40-year-old Mayweather and a 44-year-old De La Hoya sound?

It's sounds like a situation that could unfold (at least the Mayweather end of the equation) if Floyd keeps living large long enough to run out of money, which, as we've seen, can happen to even the richest of prize fighters. Unfortunately, in the fight game, the sight of once great athletes still competing as pathetic shells of themselves is a common one. It's an ending Mayweather seems intent upon avoiding now ... but a lot can change in a year, or two years, or 10 years.

The Floyd Mayweather retirement announcement of June 6, 2008, took a lot of people in the boxing community by surprise.

But there's no excuse for being surprised by his un-retirement announcement, whenever it comes. ■

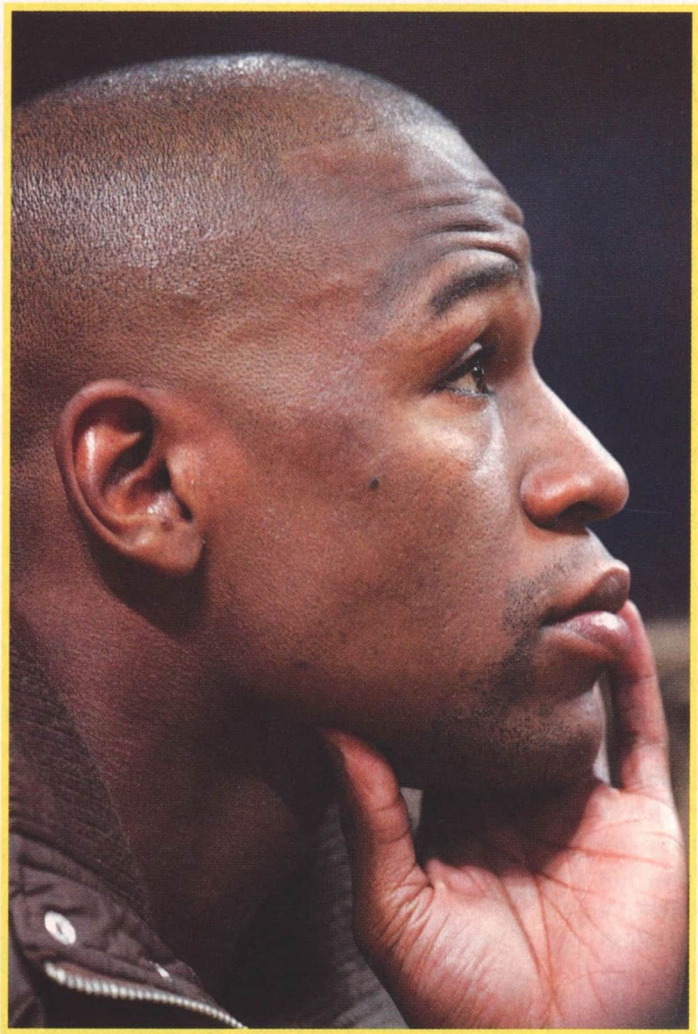


PHOTO BY LISA BLUMFELD/GETTY IMAGES

We're not sure what Mayweather was thinking when this photograph was taken, but if he's anything like virtually everybody else interested in boxing, he would have been pondering an eventual comeback.

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Paulie Malignaggi

"No Pain In The Ring Is Greater Than What I'd Gone Through Personally"

It's easy to look at Paulie Malignaggi and cast aspersions. He's the antithesis of the old-school fighter, carrying all the panache of today's modern athlete, along with the confident swagger and tilted-head look of someone who's achieved great things.

Someone forgot to tell "The Magic Man" that boxing is an old-school sport, which has resulted in the Brooklyn-based junior welterweight rubbing some fans the wrong way. But although he can be provocative, the beauty of Malignaggi is that he doesn't care. His goal is to be the best 140-pounder in the world. Love him or hate him, The Magic Man doesn't give a damn. Just so long as you don't ignore him.

Malignaggi, 25-1 (5), is approaching the biggest fight of his life this November, when he's scheduled to challenge world junior welterweight champion Ricky Hatton. Malignaggi is coming off his fourth surgery on his right hand, an injury he suffered beating Lovemore Ndou in June on the Hatton-Juan Lazcano bill in Manchester, a rematch Malignaggi and anyone watching would like to forget.

In the Ndou rematch, Malignaggi defied logic and wore hair extensions, causing the braided weave to fly all over the place, including in his eyes, every time he threw a punch. It came to a point where Buddy McGirt, Malignaggi's trainer, had to play barber and cut off the extensions between rounds so that Malignaggi could fight and see at the same time. Still, the IBF junior welter titlist survived a bad hair day and a determined effort from Ndou to get his chance against Hatton.

Three weeks after the Ndou victory, THE RING Managing Editor Joseph Santoliquito visited with Malignaggi, whose right hand was encased in a cast up to his forearm. Malignaggi spoke about his hair, his good looks, his reputation, the war he waged against Miguel Cotto in his only pro loss, his rough upbringing, and what he really thinks about Ricky Hatton's fighting ability. Santoliquito reports:

"Paulie is like an exotic fruit: You have to peel through the layers to taste the sweet juices. There is an arrogant façade there, but he's not arrogant. He's just someone who's yearned for respect and feels he's never received it, despite what he's achieved. Once he lets down his guard, Paulie is a funny guy who can laugh at himself, and is much more intelligent than he gives himself credit for. He doesn't have a high school diploma, but he has a graduate degree in life experience at the ripe young age of 27. He also has a great belief in himself, because no one in his life has ever believed in him."

The Ring: How much grief did you receive about the hair extensions you wore for the Ndou rematch?

Paulie Malignaggi: I got a lot of grief over that. I told Buddy [McGirt, Malignaggi's trainer] that I was going to do it before the fight. I can be pretty rough before a fight. I'm really not myself. I'm pretty tough to get along with, so everyone stays away from me. But everyone around me knew it was wrong. They were just too afraid to approach me about it. I can see why, with the way I get *(laughs)*. But I have a lot of people around me who care about me, and they gave me some hints that the hair was a bad move.

My problem sometimes is that I get all caught up in the hype of a fight, and I'm always trying to draw in new fans. They hear that I'm supposed to be this crazy, wild guy with all these antics, so that's what I try to give them. I know what the fans in England heard about me. They heard about my reputation, and I had to live up to that kind of reputation, and live up to the brashness and flashiness. But I got a little sidetracked with the hair *(laughs)*. I could have lost the fight, but I didn't. It's a lesson learned because of that f_____ up hair *(laughs)*. I would have kicked my ass for the rest of my life if I lost that fight over the hair.

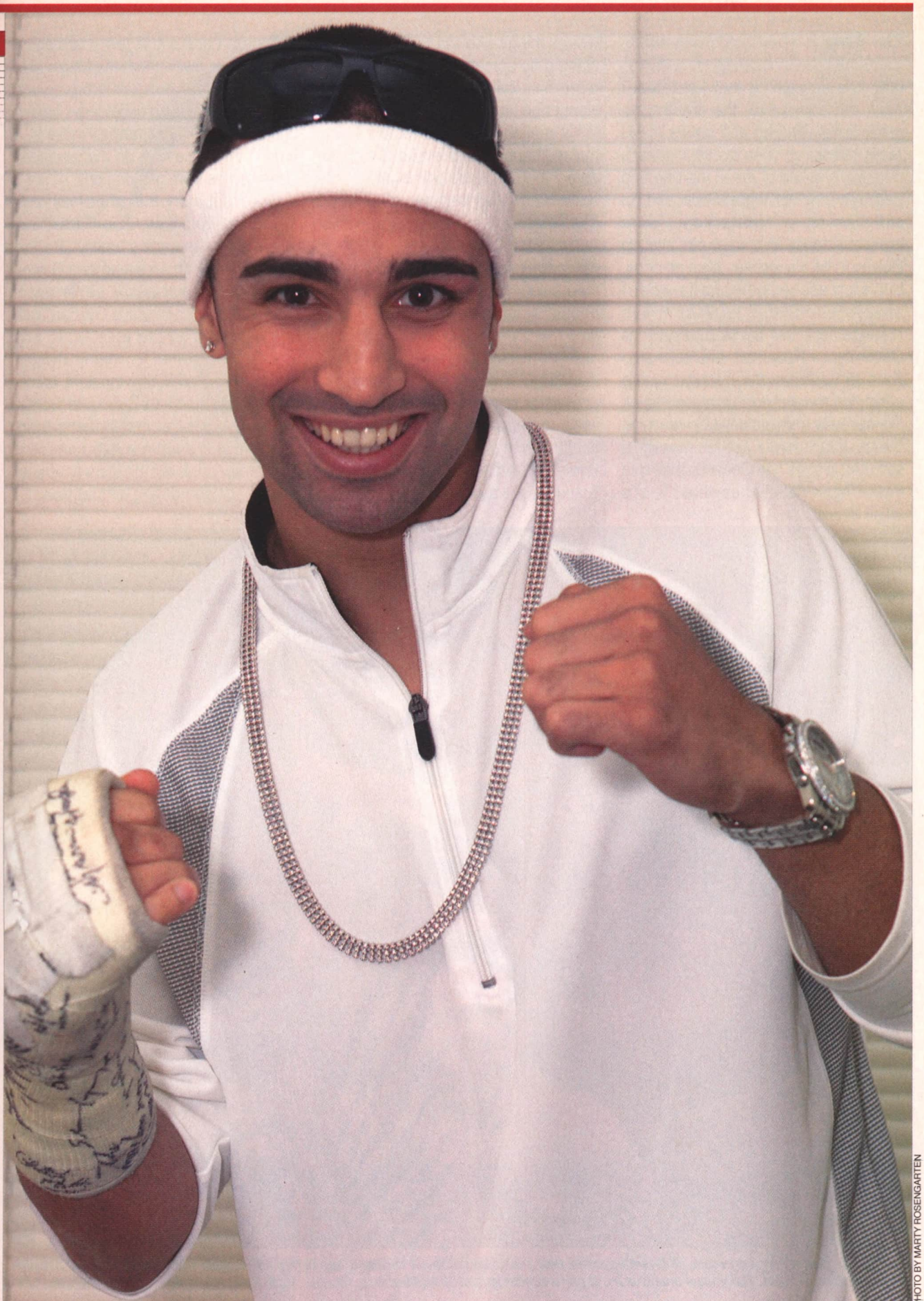

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

The Ring: Is your reputation something that you purposely created?

PM: It is something that I created. I have the cockiness, the mouth, the great looks *(laughs and points to his face)*. I think I've done everything that's ever been asked of me in the ring and beat everyone but Miguel Cotto, and I'm still starving for recognition. I want crossover appeal. I went into boxing looking to be a superstar. It's a persona, but a crossover persona is what I always wanted. I look at Floyd Mayweather. I see the kind of success Oscar De La Hoya had, and still has. I want to be them. I'm my own worse critic. I've always wanted more. I think I've severely underachieved in reaching the standard that I set for myself, a standard like the one Oscar De La Hoya has. I haven't reached that. That's where things like the hair come in. I want to do something different, but no more hair, believe me *(laughs)*. But I want to be known as someone unique. I'm a realist now. I don't know now if that will happen, that level of superstardom. I thought I'd be on magazine covers and on TV all the time.

The Ring: Do you like the image that you created for yourself?

PM: I don't know. It's weird. It's me, but it isn't really me. You know me. The people around me know who I really am. That's enough for me. What I created for myself is an exaggerated version of me. I'm only allowed to be like that with boxing. I stop myself now when I talk to people out in the street who don't know me. I'm walking around with this cast on my right hand now. Someone will ask me what happened. I tell them I broke it. A few years ago, I would have given them the Magic Man spiel *(laughs)*. How I'm a boxer, and how I'm on TV, and considered among the best in the world, and all that s___. I don't think I have to do that anymore. That comes from growing up.

I have a story that goes way back that relates to this. Eric Bottjer is a great guy who knows boxing. He told me this story about sitting at a Golden Gloves tournament six, seven years ago at Madison Square Garden, with his girlfriend at the time. Eric, who knows the game, is telling the girl what's going on during the fight, breaking things down for her, and Bottjer tells me about some kid who turns around and spouts off to him, "You have no clue what you're talking about," or something to that extent. I

PHOTO BY ALEX LIVESEY/GETTY IMAGES

"The Magic Man's" hair extensions flopped all over his face and made it difficult for him to see during his rematch with Lovemore Ndou. Although he won a close decision, Malignaggi promises not to pull a similar stunt in the future.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

"I kind of like playing the jerk. I'm confident in myself and I know that's really not me in the ring. That's someone else. I'll play the jerk to play with people, say outrageous things. Have fun with people."

laughed. We're talking about Eric Bottjer, who's been around boxing, what, 15, 20 years? The guy knows his s___. I said to Eric, "What a d__k that kid was." Bottjer laughed. He said the kid was *me*. I was like whoa, that was *me (laughs)*. I know Bottjer knows boxing. I know that now. But those are the kind of things that make reputations.

The Ring: You're a cool guy, but you come across as a jerk. Does that bother you?

DON'T MISS WILLIAM DETTLOFF

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Always insightful and often provocative, William Dettloff, The Ring's senior writer, is the thinking-fans' columnist, a writer who never settles for the same old stale commentary you've already read a dozen times. For example, here's Dettloff's take on a handful of hot topics:

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PM: If you get to know me, you know who I am and what I've been through, and if I'm still a jerk, that would bother me. I can't fault myself when people make judgments that don't know me. They'll have the opinion that I'm a jerk *(laughs)*. Hey, when the cameras are on, when I'm in the ring, I am a different person. It's like I become the Incredible Hulk. It's like my little ass becomes the big, green guy *(laughs)*. It's funny because my favorite super hero as a kid was the Incredible Hulk.

I fight on a lot of emotion, and sometimes those emotions do get the better of me. I try not to think anything negative in my life, because I don't want it to get me down. But I kind of like playing the jerk. I'm confident in myself and I know that's really not me in the ring. That's someone else. I'll play the jerk to play with people, say outrageous things. Have fun with people. Say I just won a fight and the next thing you know I'm in the ring and the announcer comes in and asks who I want next, and I'll say something like Muhammad Ali or Mike Tyson, something nuts *(laughs)*. I like getting the gaped-mouth reaction, like they can't believe I just said what I said. I know I'm not really like that.

The Ring: You have a drive to succeed. From where does that stem?

PM: I get caught up with being successful. It's the most important thing in my life. It's more important than women, jewelry, cars. When you're successful, you get that stuff. When you've been told your whole life that you're not going anywhere, where everyone around you is going to college, and you're told that you're nothing and not given any credit for anything, you start to question yourself. That's all you hear. You think about not trying anymore. You think of yourself as a f___ up. Boxing gave me a goal to achieve and try to be successful at something. People really thought I'd end up in jail or somewhere. Not here, not with any belts, or my good looks *(laughs)*.

The Ring: You used to get into fights on the streets when you were younger. Were you a thug as a kid?

PM: I wouldn't say I was a thug. Look at me. I've been tiny my whole life. No, not a thug. But in high school, friends and me used to get together and beat people up, jump them, and take things. The events in my life shaped me and I was headed in a bad direction. I knew I was doing wrong, but I looked at it as survival of the fittest. It was something I had to do in life to survive. Today, people who knew me as a kid see me on TV and will say that's not Paulie Malignaggi *(laughs)*. People thought I was nuts. That has to be his cousin, or a twin. That can't be the same Paulie Malignaggi they knew.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Malignaggi's bout against Don Camarena was supposed to be a pick-'em fight, but the Magic Man proved otherwise, dominating Camarena on ESPN2's* Friday Night Fights. *It was one of the rare times Malignaggi's hands were healthy, and the win led to his fight with Miguel Cotto.

They'd walk into this room and couldn't believe that it's me sitting here. No one thought I could be the success that I am. It's not the kind of success that I want, but not too many people believed I'd be anything in life.

The Ring: You have not had an easy life. Talk about some of the things that you've endured.

PM: I was born in New York, but I grew up in Italy. I speak Italian and English fluently. Well, some might question my English *(laughs)*, and I speak Spanish. We moved back to Sicily when I was six months old because my family wasn't ready to move here. My father, Sebastiano, was a professional soccer player. He didn't have a job over here. We were just trying to figure out as a family where we belonged. Soccer in America wasn't going to pay him what other countries would pay.

I was born in 1981, and then my brother, Umberto, came along. He was born in Sicily, in 1983, but I speak better Italian than he does *(laughs)*. We came back to the U.S. in '86, my brother, my parents, and me. By that time, my parents weren't getting along.

The Ring: Was it ugly?

PM: It was. But you don't understand that as a kid. We were moving back to America, and during my father's offseason, we would come here to visit my grandparents, so I knew this country; I just couldn't speak any English. As a kid, you love your mother and father. My father would get caught cheating with another woman and blow it off. He loved a lavish lifestyle. He was a pro athlete, and things got ugly. I didn't understand too much.

I was six when we moved back. My father got us a one-way ticket to the U.S., and he got himself a roundtrip ticket back to Italy. He left us in the middle of the night. I'll never forget that. My mother was crying, which woke me up. I started crying. I was six. I was sad. I didn't understand why he would do that. I couldn't fathom what was happening. My father was my world. He was a pro athlete. My mother would cry at night. She was left with two kids and went through a lot. I knew why she was crying, so I would start crying.

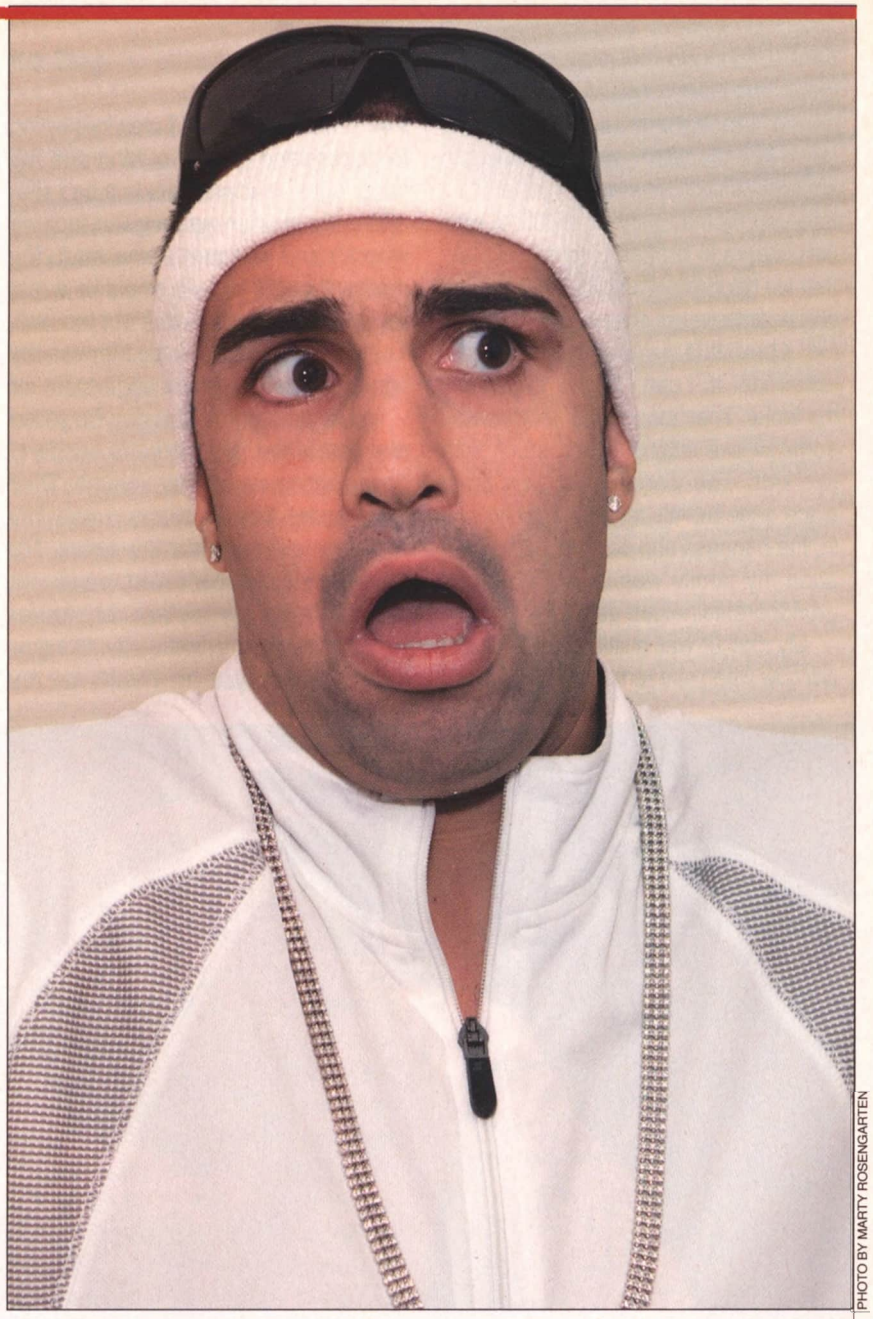

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

"People who knew me as a kid see me on TV and to this day will say that's not Paulie Malignaggi. People thought I was nuts. That has to be his cousin, or a twin. That can't be the same Paulie Malignaggi they knew. They'd walk into this room and couldn't believe that it's me sitting here. No one thought I could be the success that I am."

The Ring: How did you deal with that?

PM: Years would pass, but I just cried. That's what I did, cried through those years. I think you'd have to put a nail through my head to see me crying over anything now. The severity didn't hit me until I was an adult. My father was my

hero. I watched him play soccer. He taught me how to play, and I felt abandoned. I thought there was a time I'd never see my father again. We were in a tough position. My family was on welfare. My mother is trying to talk to grocery clerks in broken English, explain that we had food stamps, and the reaction people would give us. I was a little kid when this happened and I still remember it. I can't forget, especially the looks. They thought my mother was some whore with no man, stuck with two kids. The world could be a cruel place. Little by little things started to sink in, the badness and severity of the situation my family was in. My maternal grandparents helped us a lot.

My mother was a little younger than I am now when she remarried, around 26.

The Ring: How did life change after she remarried?

PM: It didn't *(laughs)*. I was beginning to understand that I wouldn't see my father again, and we were in a bad situation. My mother was a good-looking woman and she met some man. My mother thought that we would be a real family again. It didn't work out too well. The only man I had in my life was my father, but he was never aggressive, or yelled, or screamed. This guy, he yelled and screamed. My mother's husband began hitting my brother and me. They were some bad beatings. I saw my mother even get hit a few times. My father, my biological father, never put his hands on my mother. My father would cheat on my mother, but this guy, he'd slap her, put his hands on my brother and me. We'd get beatings. I started to think there was no way out. I was terrified as a kid. I was scared of catching a beating for breathing.

I wanted to tell my grandparents and my mother's brothers. My mother's father was a nutty Sicilian and she has four brothers. They would have beat his ass. But we were under orders. We couldn't say anything. I thought things would get better. Things just got worse and worse.

The Ring: How bad was worse?

PM: When I got a little older, I started fighting back. I still got the beating, bad beatings. But finally, one day, the summer of 1996, my brother and me were going to do something about it. We'd been living in New Jersey for about four or five years then. I was in this family

PHOTO NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

Malignaggi prides himself on his sturdy chin, but doesn't want to get into the habit of taking shots such as this blistering left hook from Cotto. The Magic Man, who suffered his lone pro loss to Cotto, says the undefeated Puerto Rican hit him harder than anyone he ever faced.

that I didn't want to be a part of, but I started to think what I had to do to change this. I was suicidal, but I wasn't going to kill myself. I just didn't want to live like that anymore.

So one day that summer, my stepfather told us before he came home from work that he was going to beat my brother and me again. I was around 15. My brother was 13. My brother and me weren't exactly angels, but my stepfather wasn't helping with the beatings. My brother and me told each other that if this guy put his hands on either or us, we were going to jump him. He came home and we were waiting up the steps. He called my brother down first and took out his belt. That was it *(laughs)*. I jumped the guy and started hitting him. My brother jumped on his back. My mother was yelling and screaming, trying to break it up. We were all over the place, breaking things, throwing things. What a mess *(laughs)*. I could laugh about it now. But then, it was serious.

It's the day that probably changed my life, because we f___ed him up. I was lumped up and bruised. My brother was beat up. But my stepfather wanted us out of the house. I say that's the day that changed my life because I didn't have to deal with him anymore. They sent my brother and me back to live in Brooklyn with my grandparents.

The Ring: How did that go?

PM: Better, but not perfect *(laughs)*. I looked at it like I'm back in Brooklyn, back where I belong. But that didn't last. I got kicked out of high school for fighting and cutting class. I was never in class. I was not an angel. I was turning into a bad kid. I was kind of lost. All the experiences that I had made me a lost kid. I didn't know who I was really and where my life was headed. I got into a fight at the end of my sophomore year, and my grandparents couldn't deal with me. By this point, I started boxing. I was expelled from the school and I started working construction with my grandfather. But I kept going back to school, even though I was expelled. When the dean that threw me out saw me, he told me he'd have me arrested for trespassing on school property. That ended my hangout *(laughs)*.

The Ring: So at that point, it looked like you'd spend your life as construction worker

PM: That's what I thought *(laughs)*. I'd go to construction sites with my grandfather rather than going to school. My grandfather would tell me to sit down somewhere and give me $10 at the end of the day. But when I think about it, none of my family went to high school. We didn't know the value of an education. No one pressed it, but they thought I'd work hard labor and see what real life is all about. It's funny, because my brother Umberto has a college degree. He took his GED and went to college. My other brother, Danny, was the first one to graduate high school from my family. My sister Marie has straight-A's. And then there's me. I don't have a high school diploma.

The Ring: What's your relationship like with your mother and stepfather now?

PM: It was cold for a while. Marie and Danny are my sister and brother, and I love them to death. But my stepfather wouldn't allow them to watch me fight on TV until a few years ago. We're civil to one another now. It's also made me appreciate my mother more. I won't ever forget what my mother went through. She could have put us up for adoption. My stepfather has respect for me now. I go over there to visit. I love my mother. But to this day, my stepfather won't apologize for what he did. In his mind, he supported us financially, and that gave him every right to treat us the way he did.

The Ring: But in a strange sense, all of the turmoil created Paulie "The Magic Man" Malignaggi, didn't it?

PM: It created Paulie the fighter. I started boxing when I was 16. I made myself a promise that no matter whatever pain I go through in boxing can't equal the pain I went through growing up. There's no pain that I experienced in boxing that can equal the pain I went through as a kid. You can't duplicate it. It's why I have no problem facing Miguel Cotto and people like that. It can't equal the amount of pain that I experienced in my life. To be a fighter as a profession, I think there has to be something a little

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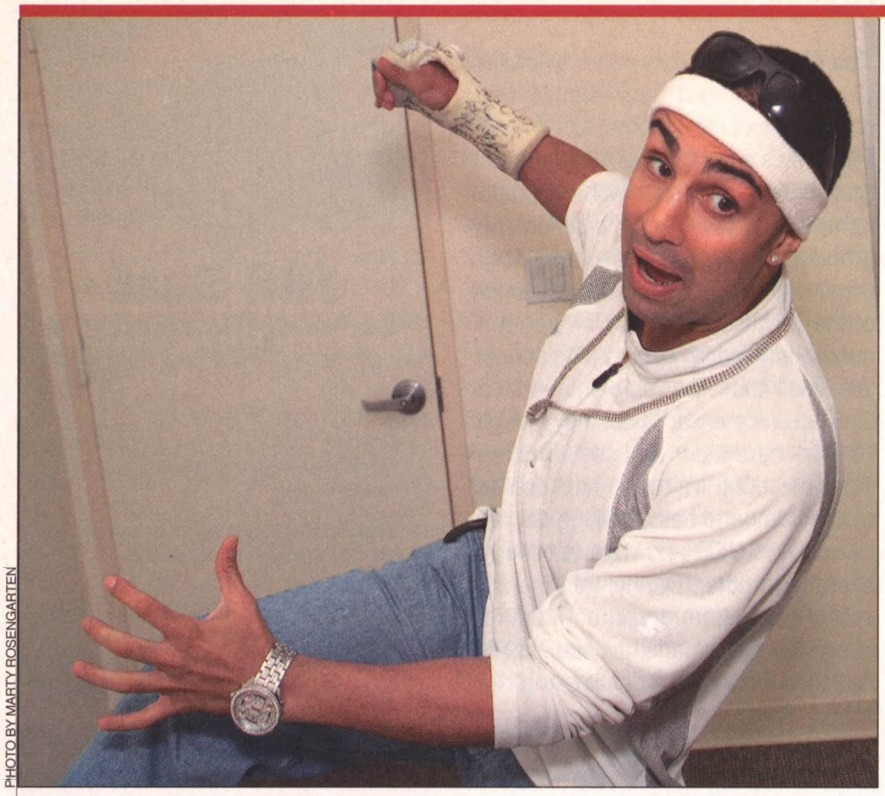

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

"I know a lot of guys out in the media knock me because they say I can't punch. These are people, like Jeff Ryan from The Ring, who may not have ever been punched in the face in their lives. My punches may not knock everyone out, but believe me, they hurt. Here, let me punch you in the face, see if it hurts."

off in your mind *(laughs)*. All in all, I'm glad things didn't turn out worse. Everything is much calmer now. I could have been a lot worse.

The Ring: What changed it for you?

PM: I didn't want to be there, just sitting at a construction site. The real reason why I wanted to learn how to fight was to learn how to kick people's ass. I wanted to kick people's asses in the street. I couldn't dedicate myself to anything. My uncle had boxed a little, so he says to my grandfather, "Let's take him to the gym." At this point, I never committed to anything. I quit things easy. My uncle and grandfather thought I'd get my ass kicked and give boxing up too. They figured that once I got my ass kicked, I'd go back to school and realize how tough real life is. It was more of a challenge. It gave me a reason not to f___ up.

The Ring: Did you consider yourself a screw-up back then?

PM: I was a f___ up because I was f___ed up. I didn't think of myself as a bad person. I didn't feel bad then about the kids I robbed. We'd beat these kids bad enough to take what we wanted. No one was hospitalized. We used to have a contest to see who could start out with the best move. You'd spot someone and follow him a few blocks. We'd think of creative ways to jump these poor kids. One time, I just flew up and hit some kid in the face walking down the street *(laughs)*. It might seem funny now, but it wasn't. I was a pretty angry kid. We'd just take beepers and cell phones. We'd sell them to other kids. No one came back at us.

The Ring: No one?

PM: One day, this kid came back to school the next day with a neck brace on and the police. I cut school that day and didn't go back. That was going to be big trouble. My grandparents thought I was a f___ up. I was doing bad things. I feel terrible about those things now. I knew I was better than that. I'll say this: I would beat the living f___ out of myself if I could walk through a time capsule and seen myself then. I was a kid with a good heart, heading in a bad direction. I'm lucky I came up then. Today, with the things I did, someone would probably have shot me by now. Who knows if I'd even be alive today?

The Ring: I understand you are your harshest critic. Is it true that if you have a bad training day, you'll go into a corner and beat yourself up?

PM: Yeah, though not so much physically beat myself up, more psychologically. I won't go to sleep. I'll think about what I did wrong in the gym all night. I'm a perfectionist. I want to be perfect. There are a lot of stressful days in training camp. I try not to be around anyone I'm close to because I don't want to put them through that. My best friend, Pete Sferrazza, I've known since I was 19, for eight years. He'll go to camp with me and take care of a lot of things for me. If I have a bad day, Pete gets the wrath of it *(laughs)*. Pete's my Bundini Brown *(laughs)*. He likes to party and get drunk, but sometimes I'm too tough on him. I'll start snapping out and throwing s___. I'll curse and yell in the gym if I had a bad sparring session. I'll bite my gloves off. I'll kick s___ and yell s___ if I can't work a certain combination. I'm hard on myself. I like hard sparring, I think more than anyone else. I mean physical good sparring.

The Ring: Do you think your commitment to your craft gets questioned?

PM: Yeah, I think it does. That's why you'll never hear me call another fighter a bum or anything like that. I know what it takes, from the lowest level to the highest level, to be a fighter. Anyone who steps in the ring has my respect. Now that doesn't mean I won't criticize how someone fights *(laughs)*. But all

boxers should respect each other, because we all know what each one of us had to do to make it.

The Ring: Do you think the media is overly critical of you? If so, why?

PM: I do, even the fans, a lot of people in general are critical of me. I think I'm held to a double standard. I know I put a lot of pressure on myself, but all people see is brashness and cockiness. I think there's a hint of jealousy. I don't know why. When I'm playing ping-pong, I have an edge about me. I don't care what it is; I want to win *(laughs)*. Some people don't like that. They like to classify you. Don't classify me. It's been my formula for success. Knock me for doing whatever, and I use it. It's not like I just showed up fight night and decided to clown around. The media, in general, doesn't take the time to know someone like me. I'm not Floyd or Oscar. The media is filled with know-it-alls. You want the real media? They're the guys who show up at the gyms and at fights. They want to know the real boxing game. They want to know the fighters. They're the ones who want to see the true character of a fighter. Some of them are blinded by my spiked hair *(laughs)*.

I know the talk and criticism. I know a lot of guys out in the media knock me because they say I can't punch. These are people, like Jeff Ryan from THE RING, who may not have ever been punched in the face in their lives *(laughs)*. You get punched in the face, I don't care who it's by, it doesn't tickle, I'll tell you that. My punches may not knock everyone out, but believe me, they hurt. Here, let me punch you in the face, see if it hurts *(laughs)*.

The Ring: When did you start to think you had made it in boxing?

PM: I don't think I've ever made it in boxing. Not like I consider success. I look at it in steps. I won my first Golden Gloves when I was 17. I hadn't even boxed a year. I just started boxing for six months in Gleason's Gym, but I knew no matter what, I'd do well. I was sparring Junior Jones three days a week. I'd go home with headaches. He was just coming off his loss to Kennedy McKinney and wasn't in any mood to play around with some kid who wasn't going to be serious *(laughs)*. I'd get my ass kicked every day by Junior, but I'd go back the next day. People would look at me like I was nuts *(laughs)*. I was one of the rare white kids in there, and that gained me respect. I became a better person and a better fighter for it. Gleason's is like family now.

People see me in the ring, but, hey, they don't know what I've been through and what I've gone through in the gym. That's what pisses me off. They see Paulie the pretty boy, a prima donna. But the difference comes when you have to step up and fight. Listen, no one is as confident about his looks as I am *(laughs)*, but in the ring, I'm thinking about winning and getting the job done. I don't care about my looks. What com-

PHOTO NICK LAHAM/GETTY IMAGES

Malignaggi says he lives with the Cotto defeat every second of every day. There was, however, one major positive resulting from his only pro loss: Malignaggi's brave performance erased the pretty-boy image and stopped critics from questioning his heart.

pletely caught me off-guard has been the hand injuries. When I first started this, I thought about brain damage, or if I'd lose my teeth. But now my hands get hurt.

The Ring: How bad have the hand injuries been?

PM: Four surgeries on my hands. After the third surgery, I thought I was through. That came after the Jeremy Yelton fight. I remember them all. The first surgery was in December '02, the second December '04, the third August '05, and now June '08. I started to think I couldn't do this anymore. I hadn't won a belt yet. I hadn't done anything but maintain an undefeated record. I used to think my career wouldn't go any longer, but the third surgery went well. From there, I was able to show what I am about as a fighter. Don Camarena was my 21st fight and it was on ESPN. It was the first time in a long time since early as a pro that I was able to fight with both hands. I heard as the fight was coming how it would be a pick-'em fight. I knew. I kept thinking, *Wait until they get a load of me.* I couldn't wait for the fight. I felt great. I saw the rumblings on the Internet that I was a one-handed fighter. I dominated Camarena. That's what got me the Cotto fight.

The Ring: How did the Cotto fight change your career?

PM: A lot of people saw that I hung with one of the best fighters in the world, that I belonged in the ring with the best fighters. It was the first big event I was a part of. I started that fight a little tighter than I should have, but people realized that I was a fighter; people realized that I would get in the trenches to fight. Cotto is the hardest puncher I ever faced *(laughs)*. He has jolting power. I have a good chin, but Cotto throws pain in his punches. But I'll go back to what I've been saying: No pain in the ring is greater than what I'd gone through personally.

The Ring: The Cotto fight has stayed with you, hasn't it?

PM: Every day, every minute. I live with that fight every day. But it's been the psychological pain that's hurt me. It sucks to lose. But I had to learn from that. I was still 25 when I fought Cotto, and I was very depressed after the fight. What helped me get through it was the

PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

One of Malignaggi's most impressive performances came in his first fight against Lovemore Ndou, in June 2007. Malignaggi wants to attract more fans, but he also wants fans and media alike to look at him beyond the spiked hair and colorful costumes he wears in the ring.

World Cup. Italy won! That took my mind off it, like I had won something in '06 *(laughs)*. I yearn for the day that I can fight Cotto again. People think I'm crazy for thinking and saying that.

The Ring: What would you do differently in a rematch?

PM: I was just a little tight. I remember coming out of the tunnel and just being blown away by it all. Not just the crowd, but also the way everyone was waiting for that one moment when I walked out. I also remember that ring being small as hell, and I'm in there with this monster *(laughs)*. The whole scene told me I was the center of attention. But all week I was being told I'd get my ass kicked. I was up for the challenge. The tightness, though, that had something to do with me not being as sharp as I wanted to be. I need to be more relaxed in big fights. I know I'll keep my nerves better, especially when I fight Ricky Hatton.

The Ring: It looks like you'll fight Hatton next for THE RING junior welterweight world championship, right?

PM: My next big fight, I'll be calmer for that, like staying calm in the storm. That's a big factor in a big fight. I already have a few tricks in mind for Hatton. I've been waiting for a fight like this. I just need to get that key win against Hatton and that would put more naysayers on the positive side. I have no problem saying that if you don't believe in Paul Malignaggi, f___ you, because I've done enough to get the respect that I'm a world-class fighter.

THE RING belt is important, but it comes with pros and cons. THE RING brings clarity. One clear-cut champion, no bulls___, and all 10 contenders are legitimate. Fans need that. The one big con: THE RING has no way to enforce fights. Junior Witter lost to Timothy Bradley, but if that didn't happen, Hatton wasn't going to fight Witter. Witter deserved a Hatton fight. I'd like to see things like that enforced. I can imagine it's tough, dealing with promoters and TV cable networks.

The cons of the organizations are their crazy, crazy ratings. The sanctioning fees add up. They take money out of your pocket every time. The one thing that's a big plus is that every time I have a belt, I get bigger paychecks. Winning one of those four major sanctioning belts means more money, and I think that's something THE RING belt is becoming. It helps us make more money. I'm wearing diamonds now because of the IBF title. But I really understand fans being confused with all these title fights.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

"Hatton is a limited fighter. He can't box. I'm not going to criticize him personally, because I really like Ricky. I just don't think he's much of a fighter, or was ever much of a fighter. I'm not just talking out of my ass here, he's the John Ruiz of the junior welterweight class."

The Ring: What problems do you expect from Hatton?

PM: I learned, in big fights, especially my fight against Cotto, the referee is more like a spectator. Cotto was headbutting and throwing low blows, but I never complained one time during the fight. It is what it is. In the Hatton fight, the difference will be what Hatton does, sorry, what Hatton is *allowed* to do inside. He mauls and holds. That's all he does. A lot of idiots in the media say he's an inside fighter. He's basically a guy who gets away with anything and everything he wants. Having said that, I do expect the referee to enforce some rules *(laughs)*.

Hatton is a limited fighter. He can't box. I'm not going to criticize him personally, because I met him and I really like Ricky; I think he's a real cool dude. I just don't think he's much of a fighter, or was ever much of a fighter *(laughs)*. He's a great person, but I'm not just talking out of my ass here. He's the John Ruiz of the junior welterweight class. Just watch any of his fights. Billy Graham, his trainer, tells Ricky in the corner that if he's not doing anything against Mayweather, to make sure Mayweather isn't doing anything. Basically, Graham was giving Hatton instructions to hold. Believe me, I'll be ready for anything Ricky Hatton has to offer. ■

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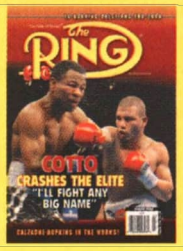

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TEN MOMENTS THAT CHANGED BOXING

By Gavin Evans

For outsiders, boxing is the most basic of sports: two men (or perhaps women) bashing each other up for the delight of other people. We are told it is primal, brutal, animalistic, even a metaphor for life. It is something so basic that it is bound to be timeless and unchanging.

But they are wrong. When we peruse the history of our sport over the past three centuries, what is remarkable is just how much it has changed, probably more than baseball, soccer, basketball, or football. It still involves two people hitting each other to entertain others, but the ways they hit and prevent themselves from being hit, and the rules that govern this behavior, are remarkably different from those of the past.

The blend of striking and wrestling that prevailed in the bare-knuckle era bears only the most fleeting resemblance to modern boxing, and the game has also changed vastly since the slow paced early-gloved era, with its tiny mitts and interminable fights. Some of these changes have been gradual, others relatively sudden and decisive.

Every so often, professional boxing hits a crisis: a move to ban the sport, a death in the ring prompting public outrage, a decline in participation or revenue. For a while, it might look like doom and gloom, and then something will arise to prod it in a new direction.

The catalyst might be a boxer who introduces some new dimension to the sport (we have chosen Jack Johnson, Joe Louis, and Muhammad Ali), a promoter such as Tex Rickard who finds new ways of making money out of the game, a change in rules (Broughton, London, Queensbury, and since then other changes in response to other crises), or a technological innovation (film, radio, television, the Internet). It could even be a political development such as the spread of colonialism or the collapse of communism, which injects new blood into the game.

And the result may be that boxing finds a new source of energy, which, in the end, might create its own problems. Saviors like Ali and Louis eventually decline, promoters steal, cheat, and manipulate, television networks withdraw or lose viewers, and sometimes apparently insurmountable problems arise, like the pernicious virus of the alphabet bodies, which for too long has seemed incurable.

What we offer here are 10 developments, listed in chronological order, that have changed our sport, although you may well consider that some of those in our Honorable Mention page have been equally profound in their impact.

THE BROUGHTON RULES

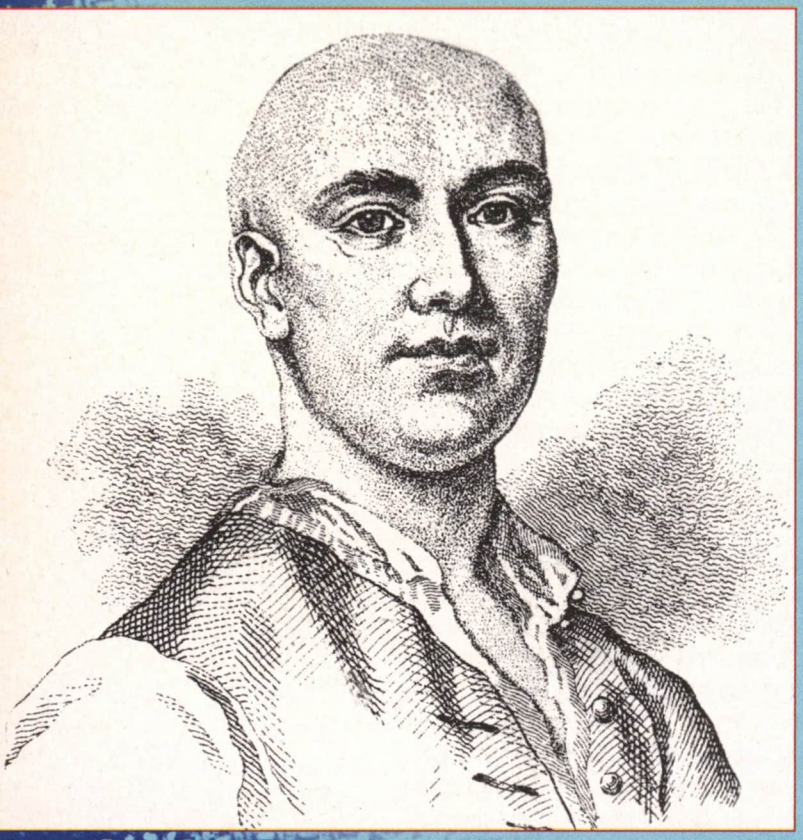
Jack Broughton, the 38-year-old, 5'10½", 196-pound English bare-knuckle champion, subjected one of his challengers, George Stevenson, to a brutal 45-minute beating in 1741. A month later, Stevenson died as a result of his injuries, and the distraught Broughton retired—then changed his mind and introduced Broughton's Rules to bring some law and order to the fight game.

Boxing had been growing in popularity over the previous century, as a village sport before spreading to the towns. Right from the start, there was a symbiotic relationship between the fighting men and wealthy patrons because it involved servants and other commoners fighting for wagers made by aristocratic backers. In this way, it became an alternative to dueling. But the rules were loosely defined and varied from contest to contest. In its early days, "milling" also involved wrestling and kicking.

Broughton introduced seven simple rules, written with the aid of a "favored gentleman." They allowed grappling, but declared that "no person is to hit his adversary when he is down, or seize him by the ham, the breeches, or any part below the waist: a man on his knees to be reckoned down." They prohibited all but the fighters and their two seconds from the ring. Rounds were of indeterminate length, ending whenever a boxer touched down or had to be "parted from the rails." A downed man had 30 seconds to rise, and fights could only end by knockout, capitulation, or police intervention. The winner received two-thirds of the prize money.

Broughton's profile, his backing by the Duke of Cumberland, and his status as Yeoman of the Guard for King George II meant these rules won widespread acceptance, and boxing took off as a major British pastime, partly because of the status of the entrepreneurial Broughton, who officially retired, undefeated in 1744. He opened his own boxing amphitheatre (which also hosted fights

Broughton introduced boxing's first set of rules



The Marquess of Queensbury, John Sholto Douglas

with weapons and bear baiting), while running an academy to teach aristocrats self-defense (the former swordsman was said to be extremely adept at blocking, parrying, and wrestling).

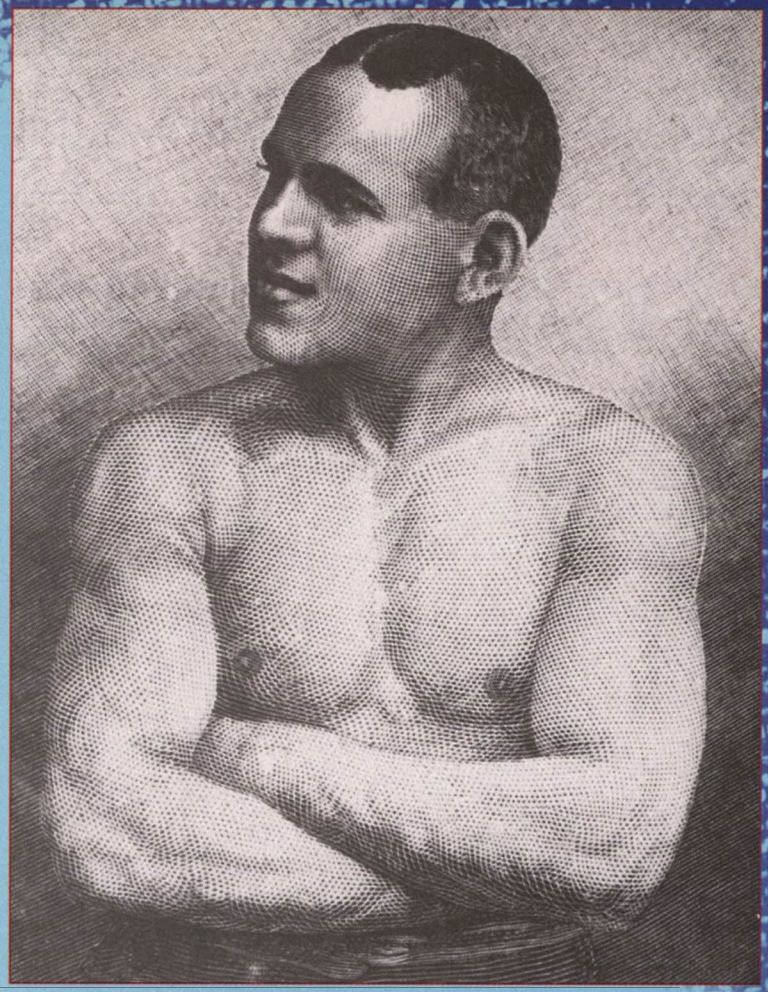
Finally, in 1750 he took on the 202-pound Norwich butcher Jack Slack. After 14 minutes, the 46-year-old was blinded in one eye and the other eye was already closed. Cumberland, who'd wagered £10,000 on Broughton, yelled abuse at his charge, to which the fighter replied: "I can't see my man, your Highness; I am blind, but not beat." Cumberland accused Broughton of throwing the fight, withdrew his patronage, and persuaded parliament to enact a bill banning boxing, although it was only Broughton's amphitheatre that was closed.

Meanwhile, the Broughton Rules continued to govern the sport until two widely publicized ring deaths prompted the British Pugilists' Protective Association to sponsor the London Prize Ring Rules in 1838. These built on Broughton's system, but were more detailed and, for the first time, introduced a referee into the equation.

Meanwhile, amateur boxing was thriving, its origins going back to Broughton's tuition. Early in the 19th century, it became immensely popular among the English upper classes (taught in private schools, universities, and the army). One contemporary report claimed a third of the peerage was taking lessons from former English champion "Gentleman" John Jackson. This alliance between "The Fancy" (swaggering, aristocratic fight fans) and the fighting men prompted its own jargon (the "flash"), and no aristocrat was more enamored with this life than Lord Byron, whose poems are full of flash and who saw his daily sessions with his friend, Jackson, as a cure to lovesick depression and the ideal antidote to effeminacy. In the second half of the century, boxing spread to the working class.

The amateurs boxed with gloves and eschewed the grappling side of the game, and eventually, in 1865, a Cambridge University oarsman, John Graham Chambers, drew up a new set of rules. Two years later, they were sponsored by his college friend, a thoroughly nasty former amateur boxer, wife-beater, and aristocratic thug, John Sholto Douglas, who happened to be the Marquess of Queensbury.

The 12 Queensbury Rules included the 10-count for knockouts, a minute's break between three-minutes rounds, a 24-foot ring "or as near that size as practicable," a ban on wrestling and on seconds in the ring, and the use of gloves. They also created the possibility of a limited number of rounds with the result decided by judges or the referee when the fight reached this limit. In "all other respects" they were based on the London Prize Ring Rules, which themselves were extensions of Broughton's system—suggesting that the residues of the Broughton Rules are still felt today.



Andy Bowen (pictured) fought Jack Burke for 7 hours, 19 minutes

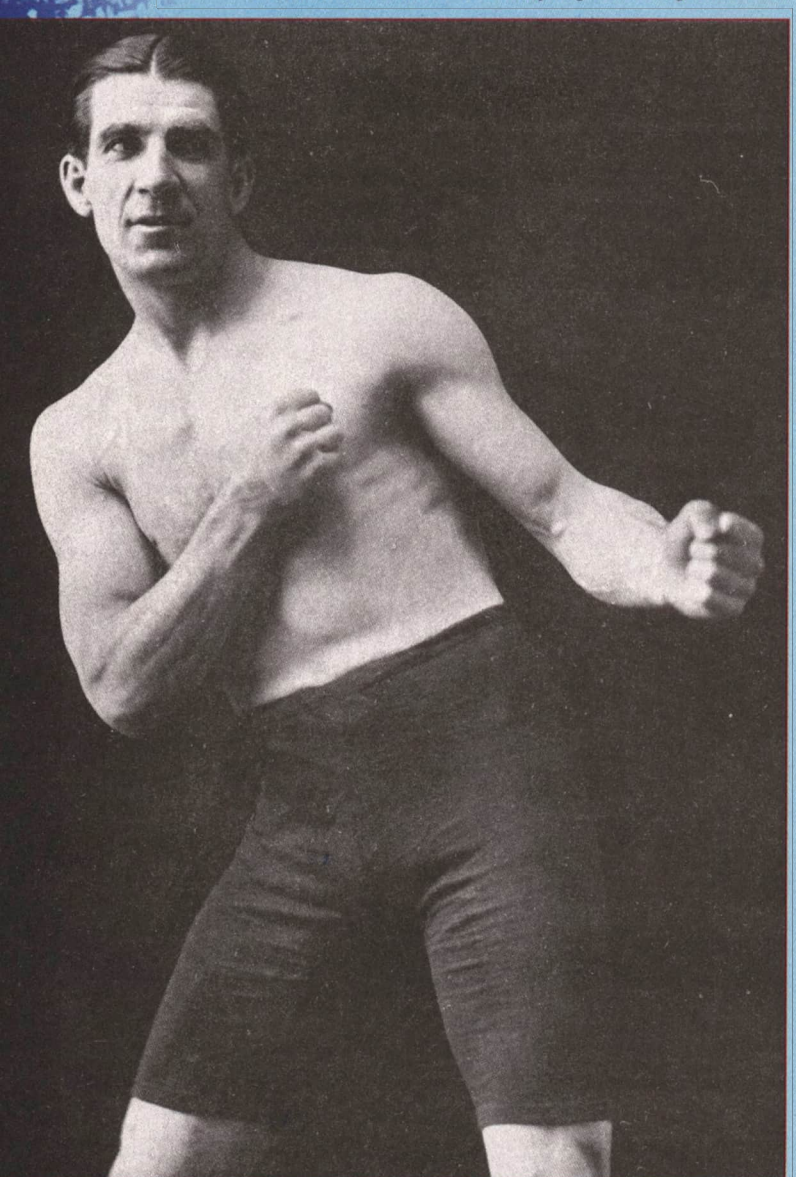
Initially confined to exhibitions and amateur fights, these new rules took 15 years before they began to make a significant impact on professional boxing and the two forms co-existed for another decade. And in their early days, the limit of bouts allowed under the Queensbury Rules was not always applied—the record being a 110-round bout in New Orleans in 1893 between Andy Bowen and Jack Burke that lasted 7 hours, 19 minutes.

Also, the style of fighting in early Queensbury Rules professional fights drew a great deal from the bare-knuckle tradition, including plenty of holding, mauling, upper body wrestling, and punching in the clinches.

And yet, these rules persisted and are now in their 141st year. The reason relates to the style they eventually fostered, with far more movement and action than in the bare-knuckle system, and, ultimately, shorter bouts, better suited to 20th-century lifestyles.

"GENTLEMAN JIM" AND THE DAWNING OF THE GLOVED ERA

Corbett was the first to win the heavyweight title in a gloved match



It is often said of John L. Sullivan that he was the last bare-knuckle world champion, but he was also the heavyweight division's first gloved world champion. And yet, perversely, it was his defeat that heralded the decisive start of boxing's modern era.

Sullivan won U.S. recognition by knocking out Paddy Ryan in 1882 and he internationalized his claim with victories over Britain's Charley Mitchell and, in 1888, Irish-American Jake Kilrain—2 hours, 16 minutes of wrestling, clinching, and slugging that ended the bare-fisted era.

Sullivan ended the fight in better shape than Kilrain, but still with a black eye, bleeding ear, multiple bruises, and grotesquely swollen hands. Therefore, it is not surprising that Sullivan preferred fighting with gloves. At least 41 of his professional fights were fought with gloves that weighed from two to five ounces. In fact, in his entire career, "The Boston Strong Boy" fought only three bouts under bare-knuckle rules (and two of those were with skin-tight gloves).

So when he defended against Corbett in 1892 there was no question this would be fought under Queensbury Rules. Nevertheless, this fight marked the first time a world heavyweight champion had defended his title using padded gloves (five-ounce), which gave Corbett the distinction of being first man to *win* the title wearing gloves.

Not everyone was delighted about the transition. For example, Bob Fitzsimmons, who had several bare-knuckle fights early in his career, complained that the un-gloved champions of his childhood were "gone, never to return," adding that those of the future would be "as children" compared with his heroes.

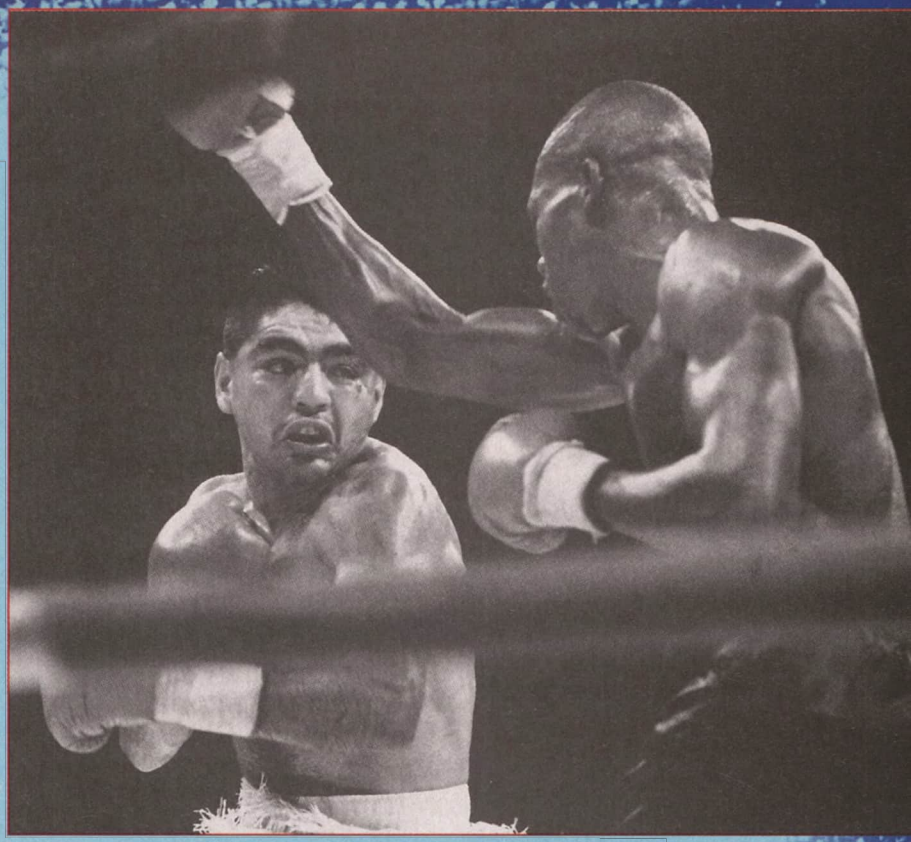
In reality, gloves were already 150 years old by then. They were invented by John Broughton in 1743 (usually weighing 10 ounces and stuffed with lamb's wool or horse hair) and were widely used for sparring and exhibitions, with lighter versions for amateur bouts. By the second half of the 19th century many professional bouts under bare-knuckle rules were fought using skin-tight gloves.

By 1880, the game was already in a state of transition to the gloved era. Title fights in

the lighter weights were fought under Queensbury Rules, while bare-knuckle rules were restricted to the occasional U.S. heavyweight encounter. But after the Sullivan-Kilrain fight, bare-knuckle fights came to an end.

Corbett, the former high school graduate, bank clerk, baseball professional, and amateur boxer, clearly represented something different from the boozy, rough-and-ready, barroom brawler Sullivan. In reality, Gentleman Jim too was a bully and streetfighter, capable of thuggish and racist behavior, but he usually remembered how to behave in public. He spoke of the "value of a good tailor" and cultivated a debonair image.

Moreover, he boxed in a style that seemed refined for American big men—more movement and emphasis on defense than usual for heavyweights, most of whom, at that time, relied more on brawn. His victory in 21 rounds was seen to represent the triumph of the modern style over the old, although in retrospect it might more accurately be said to reflect the triumph of a fit, young, athletic man over a fat, unfit, older alcoholic.



Six-ounce gloves were abandoned after Kid Akeem was badly hurt in his 1991 fight with Robert Quiroga

The press heralded Corbett as a fitting representative of a new era, and this helped secure boxing's survival at a time when its legality was in a twilight zone. A relatively cultivated champion, boxing with gloves under the Queensbury Rules, just like the amateurs, seemed civilized enough, and dispute over the sport's legality became less tenuous.

There were, however, still several questions to be settled, including the size of the gloves. Two-ounce gloves were used in some fights as late as 1903, but five-ounce, and then six-ounce gloves became the norm, only dying out after Robert Quiroga's 1991 title defense against "Kid" Akeem Anifowoshe, which left loser Anifowoshe in a coma. After that, eight-ounce gloves were used in all lighter-weight bouts and 10 ounce gloves in the heavier divisions (although there are now debates as to whether heavier gloves might, in fact, cause more brain damage).

Another change was the thumbless glove, invented in 1890 and used occasionally to prevent boxers being thumbed in the eye. But the thumbless glove never really took off, and, instead, the thumb-attached glove won widespread backing from the mid-1980s and became mandatory with most commissions.

While it is true that the introduction of gloves, and of the Queensbury Rules more generally, brought boxing into the modern era and contributed to its survival, fights of the time bore only passing resemblance to the contemporary scene.

There is a huge difference between 12-round title bouts fought at nighttime with foam-padded, 10-ounce gloves, and fights under the bright sun, lasting as long as 100 rounds, fought with five-ounce horsehair-filled gloves, without mouth shields or groin protectors and no neutral corner rule.

By today's standards, most professional fights at the turn of the century moved at paint-drying pace, with more clinches per round than Henry Akinwande or John Ruiz could manage between them. There was no combination punching, no hooking off the jab, in-fighting consisted largely of holding and hitting, and boxers still fought in the lean-back, head-high style of the bare-knuckle era.

But it didn't take long for the game to adapt, and by the 1920s most of the stylistic innovations that help define modern boxing had emerged—usually first in the lighter weights before finding their way, in muted form, among the big men.

THE BIRTH OF FIGHT FILMS

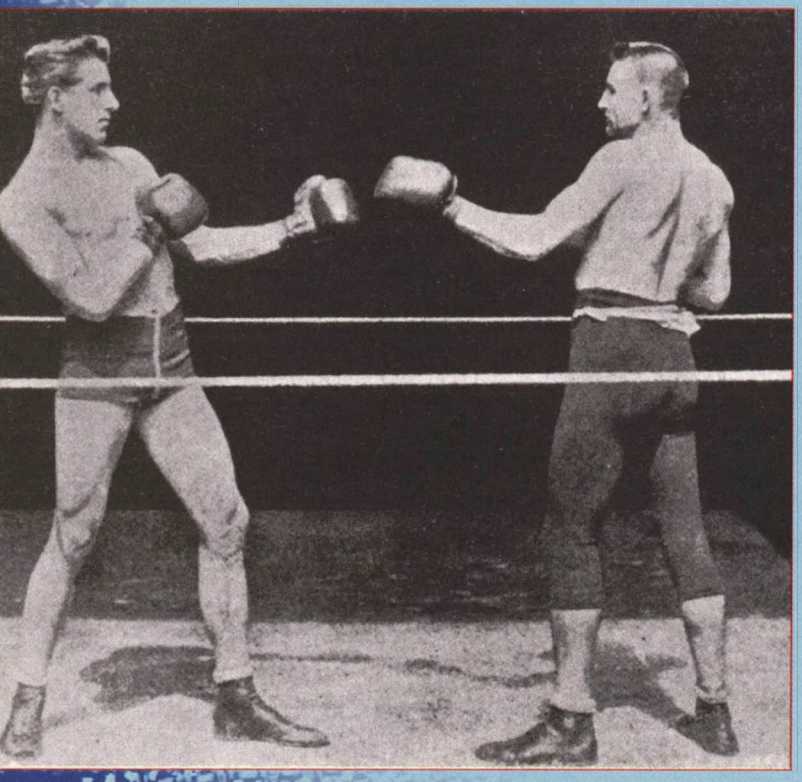
The first champion to appear on film was Jim Corbett, but if Thomas Edison had his way, the honor would have belonged to John L. Sullivan.

Edison invented the kinetoscope with the help of his assistant, W. K. L. Dickson (who did most of the work), and decided boxing was the ideal subject for his peephole machine. He filmed an exhibition between Mike Leonard and Jack Cushing in 1894 and, satisfied with the results, decided the way to publicize it would be to get the world's most famous boxer to appear before the camera.

His pick was the immensely popular Sullivan, but the price demanded was too high and so instead Edison settled for "Gentleman Jim," who accepted the $4,700 fee and agreed to a script that would see him boxing an odd-looking middleweight named Peter Courtney, over six, two-minute rounds, with the knockout at the end of sixth. The film was not shown publicly, although in retrospect it does no favors to Corbett, who looks clumsier than posterity would otherwise suggest.

Next, Edison homed in on the 1896 Bob Fitzsimmons-Peter Maher fight in Langtry, Texas, but the promoter, Dan Stuart, refused to pass any of his takings on to the boxers, so an angry Fitz made sure the venture failed by knocking out Maher in 95 seconds—before filming started.

Corbett and Courtney square off prior to Edison's 1894 film



The era of fight films really began with the Fitzsimmons-Corbett bout in Carson City, Nevada, on March 17, 1897. This time, Enoch J. Rector, a former Edison employee, purchased the rights for $13,000 and filmed from ringside with three Veriscope cameras, using 66 mm film. Two months later, it was ready for the public. Shown on 10-foot by 10-foot screens and lasting 90 minutes, it became hugely successful and boosted the popularity of boxing. Incidentally, much of the footage survives (discovered in a New Jersey barn in 1958 by future Mike Tyson manager Jim Jacobs), showing gunfighters Bat Masterson and Wyatt Earp on crowd control duty and a fair amount of the action.

The next successful attempt featured an indoor fight, Jim Jeffries' 1899 points win over Tom Sharkey. This time they used 400-arc lamps just above the heads of the fighters (so low that Jeffries could touch them). The heat was intolerable, singing the hair of the boxers, but they lasted 25 hard rounds.

Fight films became big business, so big that the risk of quick knockouts could not be contemplated. Champions were instructed to carry their opponents, a classic case being Jack Johnson's 1909 defense against Stan Ketchel, where he plays with Ketchel until the 11th round, when the middleweight dropped him with an overhand right. Johnson leaped up and flattened Ketchel, knocking out four of his teeth in the process.

A year later, the film of Johnson's one-sided victory over Jeffries ignited race riots in several U.S. cities, prompting Congress to pass a law banning the interstate transportation of fight films (eventually repealed by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1940).

Yet this did not stop fight films from playing a major role in expanding the appeal of boxing, often fueling further controversy, some persisting to this day. For example, in his 2001 book *The 12 Greatest Rounds of Boxing*, Ferdie Pacheco wrote that in 1963 he'd been shown an 8 mm film of the Dempsey-Willard fight by Jack Dempsey's manager, Jack Kearns. This showed Dempsey walking to the corner at the end of the first round, dropping his hand to his side, "and out came an iron object that resembled a railroad spike." A man at ringside removed his hat, placed it over the object, and placed the spike in his pocket. Kearns died later that year and the film disappeared.

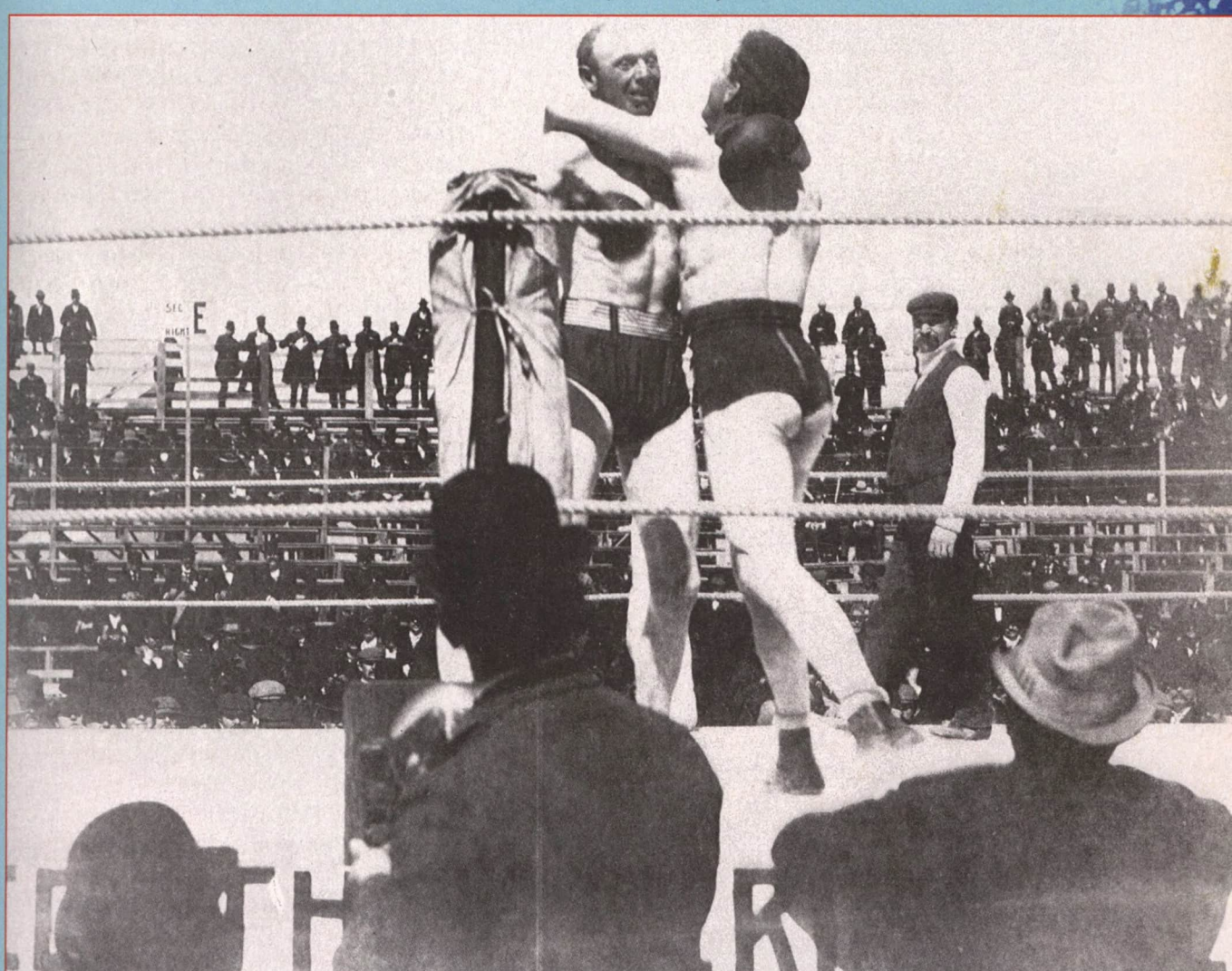
When Dempsey defended against Luis Angel Firpo in 1924, a haymaker sent the champ through

the ropes. Newspapermen pushed Jack back into the ring, but there were claims he was out for over 10 seconds. The film of the fight shows Dempsey flying out the ring and clambering back, but not the intervening seconds. The film's editor later admitted that Dempsey's promoter, Tex Rickard, ordered him to cut and splice this section of film to prevent proof of a long count emerging.

But sometimes a film helped to resolve controversy. The film of the 1927 "Battle Of The Long Count" clearly shows Gene Tunney down for 14 seconds (not 18), alert and ready to rise, while the film of the 1915 Willard-Johnson fight flies in the face of Johnson's claim that he took a dive in the 26th round—the exhausted 37-year-old was clearly knocked out.

Today, with ESPN regularly showing films of past greats, with clips finding their way onto YouTube or being sold on eBay by collectors, we have far more opportunity to assess the strengths and limitations of fighters from the past.

Most major title fights of the 20th century were filmed, but, sadly, many no longer survive. You can see clear evidence of Corbett, Fitzsimmons, Jeffries, Johnson, and Langford, but the only clip of Harry Greb in action is 30 seconds of him play sparring with Philadelphia Jack O'Brien in 1925. There are also no films of Ezzard Charles' three great wins over Archie Moore, of Sugar Ray Robinson's victories over Kid Gavilan, the first and second wars between Tony Zale and Rocky Graziano, or the first two fights between Willie Pep and Sandy Saddler.



The first commercially successful fight film was of the Fitzsimmons-Corbett heavyweight title fight in 1897

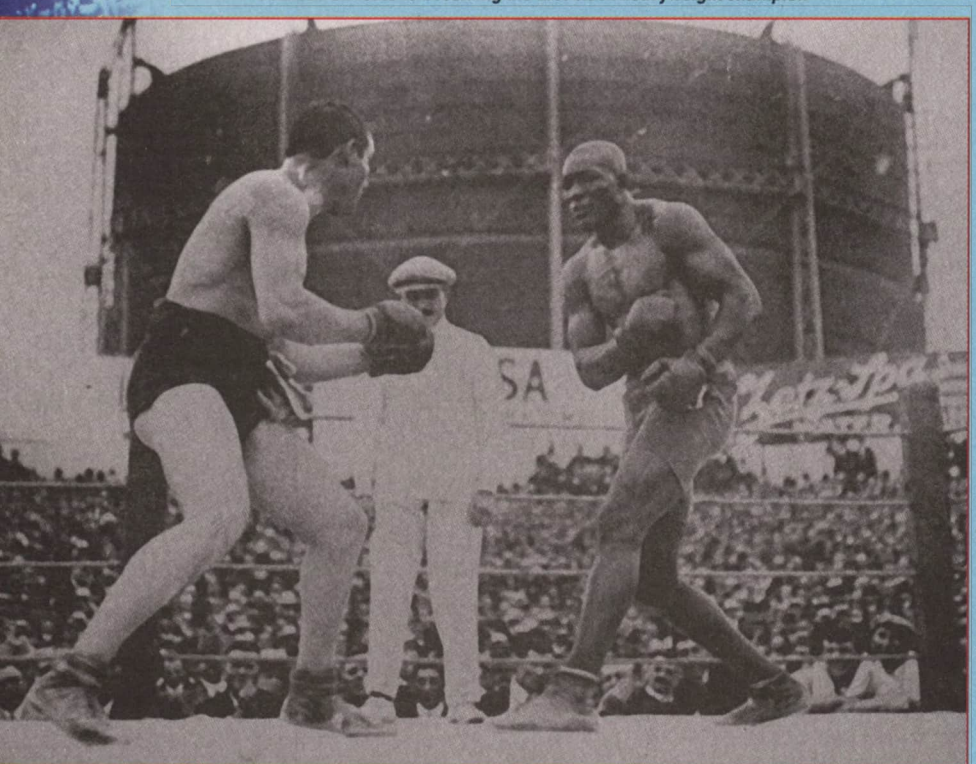
JACK JOHNSON BECOMES THE FIRST BLACK HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION

The fact that it was Jack Johnson who became the first black man to win the world heavyweight title was testimony not just to his exemplary talent. His persistence, marketing ability, and sheer good luck also played their part.

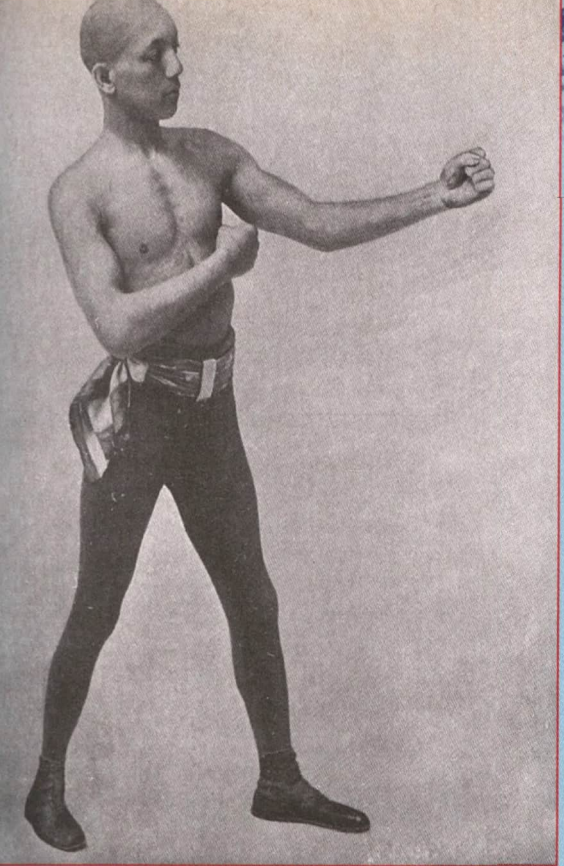
The story of black men and heavyweight titles goes back to the early 19th-century when a lithe 5'6" black middleweight Bill Richmond beat a string of the best heavyweights in Britain, but at the age of 42 was knocked out by top dog Tom Cribb. Richmond then trained freed Virginia slave Tom Molineaux, who overpowered two leading Englishmen, leading to a showdown with Cribb on a freezing day in December 1810.

The 5'8½", 198-pound Molineaux was jobbed out of an historic win over the 5'10", 199-pound Englishman. Molineaux seemed on the verge of a knockout when the crowd invaded the ring and broke one of his fingers. Yet he continued to dominate, and in round 28 knocked Cribb out, but again Cribb's fans invaded, giving their man time to recover. Molineaux slipped, cracked his head on a ringpost, and was stopped in round 33. In their 1811 return, a superbly conditioned Cribb suffered a broken nose, bloodied mouth, and closed eye, but stopped an out-of-shape Molineaux in nine.

Johnson en route to becoming the first black heavyweight champion



Next came the St Croix-born, Australia-raised Peter Jackson, undoubtedly the best big man in the world, although the prevailing racist climate blocked his chance to prove it. The 6'1", 195-pound Jackson arrived in the United States in 1888 with a record of just one loss in 44, and used his superior skill and power to outclass the best heavyweights in America, prompting calls for a showdown with Sullivan. But John L. drew the color line, encouraged by his manager-trainer William Muldoon, who later admitted he wanted to "save him the humiliation of being defeated by a Negro." After three years, Jackson was offered a late-notice fight with Corbett, and despite severely spraining his ankle on the eve of the fight, and then coming down with bronchitis, most accounts suggest he got the better of their 61-round draw.



Black Canadian Dixon won the featherweight title in 1890

When Corbett beat Sullivan, Gentleman Jim set impossible conditions for a return with Jackson, including that they fight in the South. Corbett eventually lost his title to Bob Fitzsimmons (whom Jackson had trounced in an exhibition bout), and Bob lost it in his maiden defense to James Jeffries, who also drew the color line, as did his successor, Marvin Hart.

But Tommy Burns adopted a different approach. He announced he would first "give the white boys a chance," but later agreed to fight a black man if the money was right. It looked like former Johnson victim Sam McVea would get the call, but Johnson followed Burns to France, Britain, and Australia, and finally secured the fight when Burns was offered a $30,000 purse for a defense in Sydney, on Boxing Day, 1908.

Therefore, the bar on black men fighting for boxing's supreme title was eventually broken with the help of a Canadian world champion and an Australian promoter. The 6'1" 192-pound Johnson won every second of every round against the 5'7", 168-pound champion, stopping him in the 14th.

Johnson's reign was of huge symbolic significance for black people in America and helped dispel some of the racist myths about black fighters, but it hardly opened the way for others—quite the opposite. The way Johnson taunted white opponents and the fact that he dated white women was too much for white America at the time. He beat all the leading White Hopes, including Jeffries, who, after being enticed out of retirement, declared he'd bring out the latent yellow streak intrinsic to Johnson's kind.

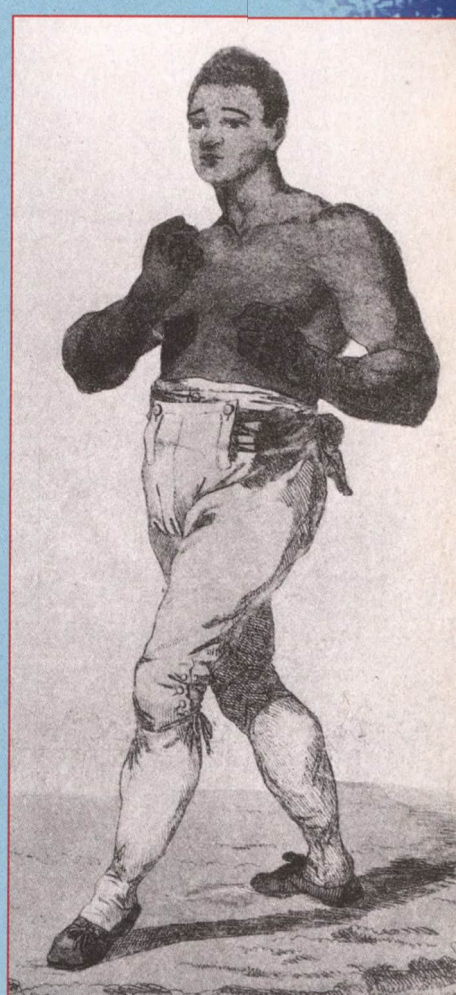
But it was all talk. Jeffries absorbed a one-sided beating, getting stopped in the 15th round, after which he admitted: "I could never have whipped Johnson at my best. I couldn't have reached him in a thousand years."

Eventually, Johnson was forced into exile on trumped up charges, but by then he was already in decline. Which was perhaps one reason (aside from money) why he too refused to defend against his three leading black contenders, McVea, Joe Jeanette, and the brilliant Sam Langford (who had improved vastly since Johnson outpointed him as a 156-pound middleweight in 1906), although Johnson did eventually fight to a draw with an inferior black challenger, Jim Johnson.

Molineaux was ripped off in an 1810 bout for the bare-knuckles championship

As for Johnson's successors, Jess Willard showed no interest in defending against the two best heavyweights in the world, Langford and Harry Wills, and when Jack Dempsey beat Willard, he declared he would "draw the color line and pay no attention to Negro challengers." A few years later he changed his mind, but his estranged promoter, Tex Rickard, made sure it never happened, having declared: "If a n___er wins the championship, then the championship isn't worth a nickel." And so it went, until Joe Louis arrived in the 1930s, under strict instructions never to behave like Johnson.

The color bar did not apply so rigidly in the lighter divisions. George "Little Chocolate" Dixon broke through by holding the world featherweight title from 1890 to 1900. Other early greats included Joe Gans, who won the world lightweight title in 1902 and held it for more than six years, and Barbados Joe Walcott, who held the world welterweight title from 1901 to 1906.



BOXING'S FIRST MILLION-DOLLAR GATE

Jack Dempsey's third world heavyweight title defense, against Georges Carpentier in 1923, might not have been the most competitive in boxing history, but that did not prevent it from breaking several records, largely through Tex Rickard's astute promotional skills.

The specially built stadium at Boyle's Thirty Acres in Jersey City officially attracted a mid-summer crowd of 80,183 but the real tally was estimated at 91,000, making it by far the biggest gate up to that point in boxing history. Ringside seats went for $50 and the cheapest seats for $5.50, shattering the previous record gate with a gross of $1.63-million.

This was also the first sports event ever broadcast on radio (using equipment on loan from the U.S. Navy), with 300,000 people listening in theaters across America. And the purses were the highest-ever, with $300,000 for Dempsey, $200,000 for Carpentier, plus a 25 percent share of film rights for each of them.

Part of the crowd of more than 80,000 that turned out for Dempsey-Carpentier

What helped make the event was the contrast between the fighters, along with the well-massaged misconception that the Frenchman had any chance of success. The handsome and relatively cultivated Carpentier, who had won the world light heavyweight title in his previous fight, had his best years before the first World War. But he was out for five years, serving with decorated honor in the French Air Force, years when Dempsey avoided military service.

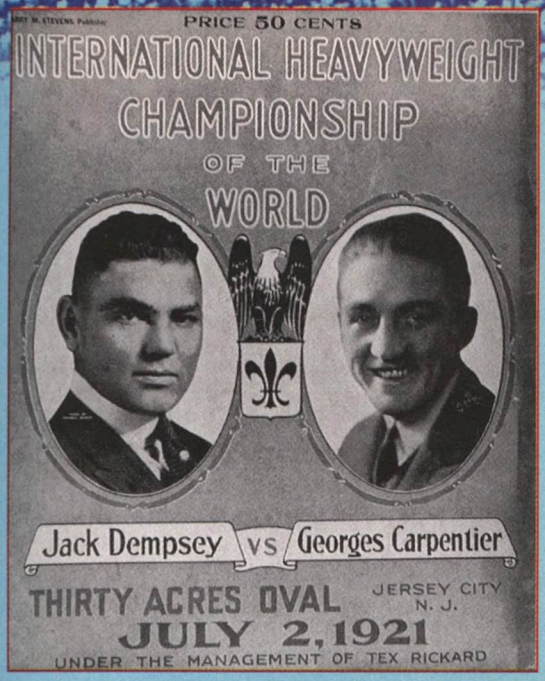
Anyway, Rickard had something to work with: the roughneck against the man of culture, the war hero against the draft dodger, the brawler against the boxer. The 5'11½" Carpentier, having his first fight in nine months, came in heavier than usual, at 172 pounds. The 6'1" Dempsey was 188 pounds, and this size discrepancy proved decisive. Twice Georges rattled Jack and once he wobbled him with a right cross that landed a bit high, but he broke his right thumb in round two, and just couldn't keep the rampant champion off. In the fourth, the Frenchman went down and then out.

To put his standing in perspective, two fights later Carpentier lost the world light heavyweight title to Battling Siki, and he would go on to get outfought by Tommy Gibbons, Gene Tunney, and Tommy Loughran.

But the importance of this bout was that it set the tone for the promotion of boxing over the following decades. Major fights featured bigger gates than before, radio took off as a major promotional weapon, and boxers' purses continued to grow. When it came to spreading the word, expanding boxing's popularity, and improving the status of the top fighting men, Dempsey-Carpentier was hugely significant.

But there was another development that this mismatch helped confirm, which has been a staple of the fight game ever since: pulling the wool over punters' eyes by giving the hard sell to the soft touch.

With Dempsey-Carpentier, Rickard had found a formula that some promoters have thrived upon ever since:



protecting their big investments by seldom exposing them to serious risk, and, instead, over-hyping essentially over-matched opposition.

By far, the two most deserving contenders for Dempsey's world heavyweight title were the top black heavyweight, Harry Wills, and the brilliantly mercurial middleweight Harry Greb (who regularly fought at heavyweight, beating several of Dempsey's opponents more impressively than Jack managed). Rickard's view was that if a black man like Wills beat Dempsey, the title "would not be worth a bucket of warm piss." As for Greb, he made the mistake of mauling Dempsey in three embarrassing public exhibitions in 1921, after which he was definitely persona non grata for Rickard and Dempsey's manager, Jack Kearns.

Instead, the title was put on ice for two years while Dempsey and Rickard made plenty of money on the side. Rickard put him in with light heavyweight Gibbons (who'd been hammered to defeat by Greb the previous year), and Dempsey won a dreary points decision, after which the promoter returned to the Carpentier formula.

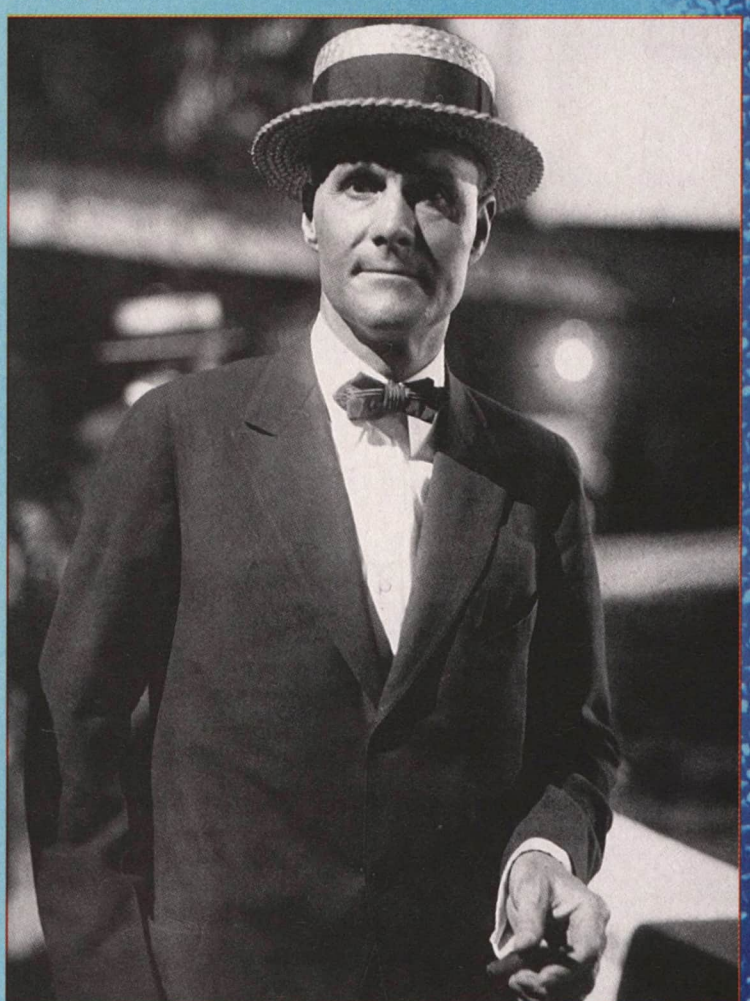
Next up was crude, amateurish Argentinean Luis Angel Firpo, imported specifically as a fall guy. Even so, the fight was attended by 80,000 people, with approximately 40,000 more turned away at the gate. Firpo nearly spoiled the plot by dropping Dempsey and then knocking him out of the ring. Paul Gallico called the Firpo fight "a thrilling atavistic brawl" that, he said, helped to mark Dempsey "as a giant killer, a slayer of ogres."

It was certainly enough to carry Dempsey through the next three years without a title fight (just plenty of exhibitions), but not enough to prepare him for the first serious challenge of his seven-year reign, against Gene Tunney in 1926.

For this fight, the official attendance was a monstrous 120,577. For their 1927 return fight, 104,943 delivered a new record gate of $2.6-million, with 82 American radio stations broadcasting the event. What is more, Tunney was paid the first-ever million-dollar purse, while Dempsey received $450,000.

Tunney, of course, won both 10-rounders with plenty to spare, but the Long Count controversy helped to confirm the Dempsey legend, adding in the element of a man wronged for allowing his killer instinct to get in the way of a niggling rule. So, in the end, the Rickard treatment worked wonders for his standing, setting a model still followed today, and can be observed in the progress of, say, John Duddy, Amir Khan, and Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.

Tex Rickard



THE BIRTH OF TELEVISED

Boxing and television have always seemed made for each other, but the 75-year relationship between the sport and the medium has never been short of complications.

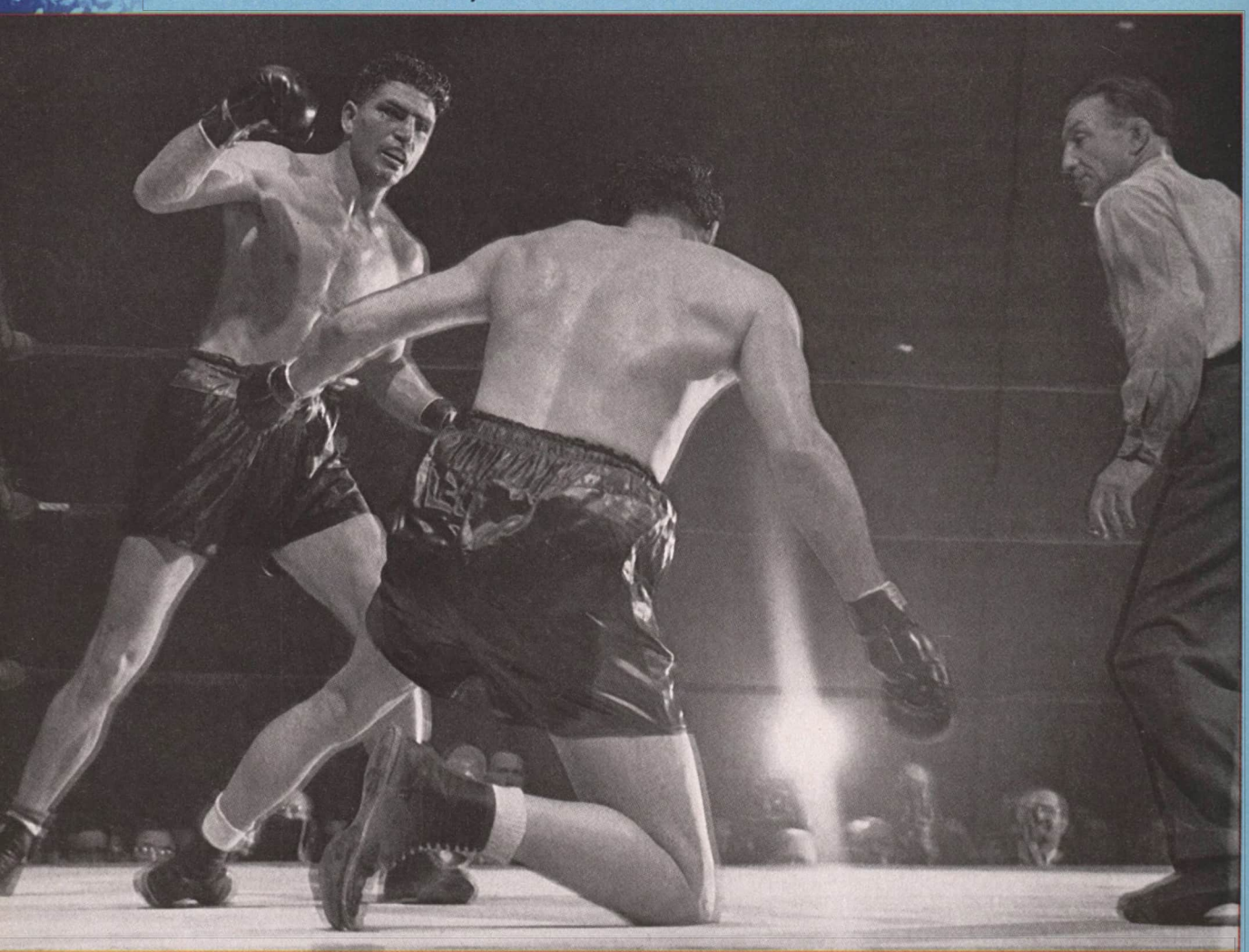
The first televised matchup featured a pair of British middleweights, Archie Sexton and Lauri Raiteri, who boxed a six-round exhibition at a BBC studio in 1933, eight years after Scotsman John Logie Baird first exhibited his new invention.

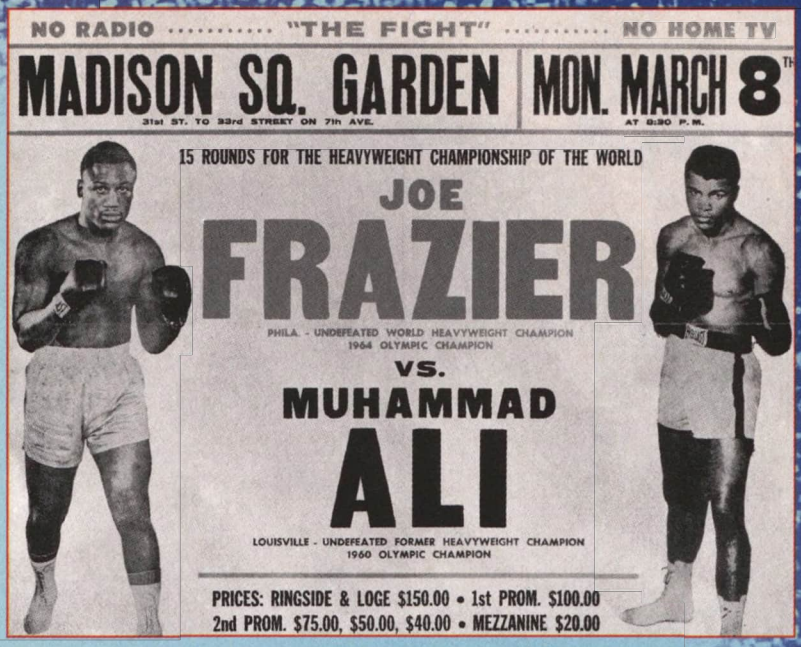
But it took five more years before the relationship started to gel. In 1938, the Len Harvey-Jock McAvoy British light heavyweight title fight was shown on closed-circuit television, and in 1939 the Eric Boon-Arthur Danahar British welterweight title fight was televised live on three cinema screens. In the United States, there were a few experimental broadcasts in the late-1930s, but the first major fight to be televised was Lou Nova's 1939 victory over Max Baer, after which THE RING predicted that television would "revolutionize" the sport.

The revolution was, however, delayed, largely by the World War II, and it took a further five years to resume. America's leading promoter, Mike Jacobs, signed a deal with Gillette and NBC for 50 televised fights, and by 1950, boxing had become a television staple on both sides of the Atlantic.

Its rules, duration, rhythm (three minutes followed by an advertising break), and physical dimensions were perfectly suited for the small screen. The only caveat was the duration of fights: anything from one minute to one hour. And its impact was immense. It meant millions of people who had never previously considered watching a

Nova floors Baer in the first major match televised in the United States





The first Ali-Frazier fight was a blockbuster for closed-circuit TV

fight could now do so from the comfort of their living rooms or with the camaraderie of their local pub.

There were, nonetheless, negatives. The huge live crowds of the 1920s and '30s became a thing of the past, and the promoters became increasingly dependent on television contracts, which ultimately made it harder to make a profit with non-televised shows.

By the mid-1950s, the big three American networks (CBS, ABC, and NBC) all covered the sport, as did the short-lived Dumont network, and at one time there were five major boxing shows per week. But the momentum slowed by the end of the decade, and one by one the major networks pulled out. In 1964, when the *Gillette Fight Of The Week* closed (with the Dick Tiger's win over Don Fullmer), the golden age came to an end and televised boxing ceased to be a routine weekly treat.

The next big move in televised boxing came through an early version of pay-as-you-go, the closed-circuit version. The first Ali-Frazier fight, at Madison Square Garden in 1971, pulled in 1.3 million viewers who watched the fight in cinemas around the country. But by the early-1980s, closed-circuit boxing fizzled out.

Two further technological developments were hugely beneficial to the purses of elite-level boxers, and to promotional profits, but with results that, at best, could be said to be ambiguous for the game as a whole.

First, satellite and cable television gave a new lifeline to promoters who had been edged out by the decline in terrestrial televised boxing. An added dimension came when these channels offered major league boxing on a pay-per-view basis, meaning more money for the boxers, mainly because of the direct revenue garnered for these fights.

However, the arrival of HBO and Showtime in America and BskyB in Britain saw the virtual death of boxing on terrestrial channels, which did not have the funds to bid for the big fights.

The result was that with the exception of a handful of A-list boxers, most of whom had cut their professional teeth in the free-TV era, the new generation of bill-headers was unknown to the general sporting public. This, in turn, meant that the sporting press lost interest, so that in America at least, boxing became a niche sport. Major talents who had not benefited from free TV exposure found it difficult to break through in terms of mass public recognition, even those who were the best in the world (which is why Floyd Mayweather resorted to *Dancing With The Stars* and pro wrestling).

But two further technological developments might just offer fresh hope for boxing.

The advent of digital television has significantly increased the number of channels available and, potentially, the number offering boxing. In Britain, for example, ITV has re-entered boxing broadcasting, with its digital channels picking up the undercard fights, putting it in competition with satellite and cable options, BskyB, Setanta, and Eurosport, while fights from the past are offered on ESPN Classic, a far more competitive situation than a few years ago.

Small- and medium-budget cards have also found a home in the United States on ESPN2, Versus, Telefurura, Telemundo, four cable networks that do not, in most markets, charge subscription fees beyond basic cable.

There has been a comparable growth in options in other parts of the world, including Germany, Australia, and South Africa.

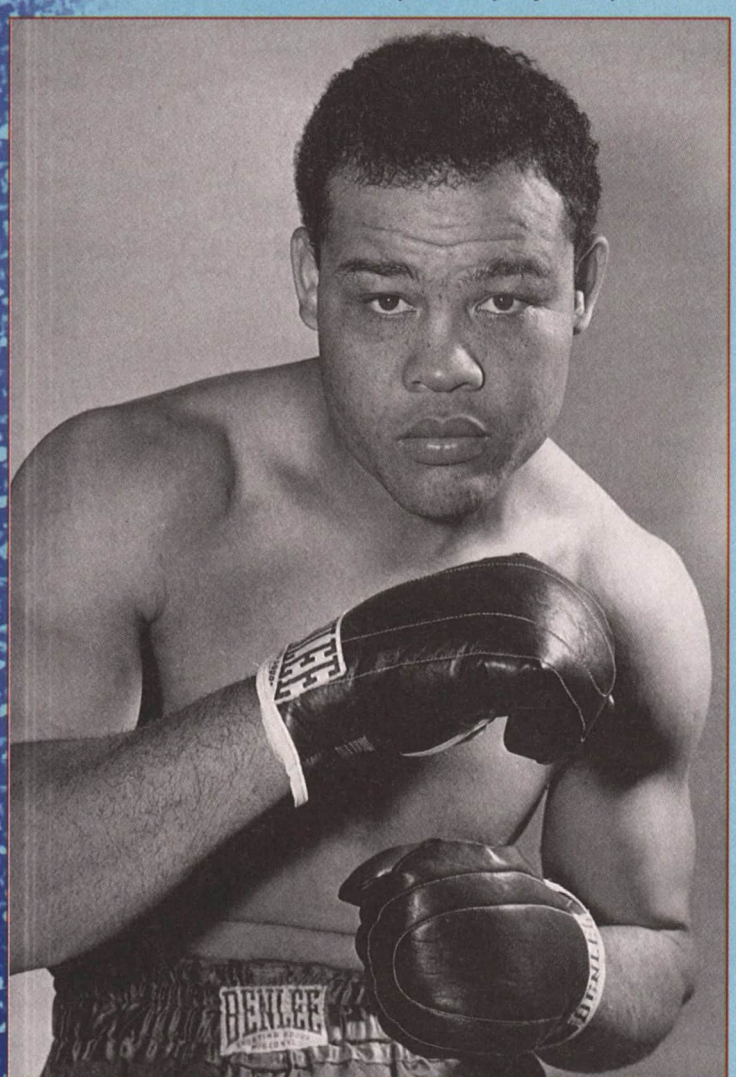
Another key development is the arrival of subscription-based televised boxing through broadband computer networks, a development likely to expand in the near future. At the same time a vast number of classic fights are available via YouTube. We can anticipate that as the worlds of television and the Internet start to converge (as they already are), the way moving images of fights are transmitted will be subject to further innovations.

JOE LOUIS WINS HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE

From the relatively enlightened vantage point of 2008, it may seem curious that Joe Louis was promoted as the "anything-but-Jack Johnson," but a great deal has changed in boxing since the 1930s, and "The Brown Bomber" was central to that transformation.

When Jack Johnson lost the title to Jess Willard in 1915, that narrow window of opportunity closed for black heavyweights, and it had to be pried open again with skill and subtlety. Between Johnson and Louis, several black heavyweights had claim to being the best big men in the world. Sam Langford and Harry Wills were the most celebrated cases, Joe Jeanette and Sam McVea also had valid claims, and in the late-1920s and early-1930s, George Godfrey and Larry Gains (who trounced both Max Schmeling and Primo Carnera) were also frozen out.

Louis: Much more than just a heavyweight champion



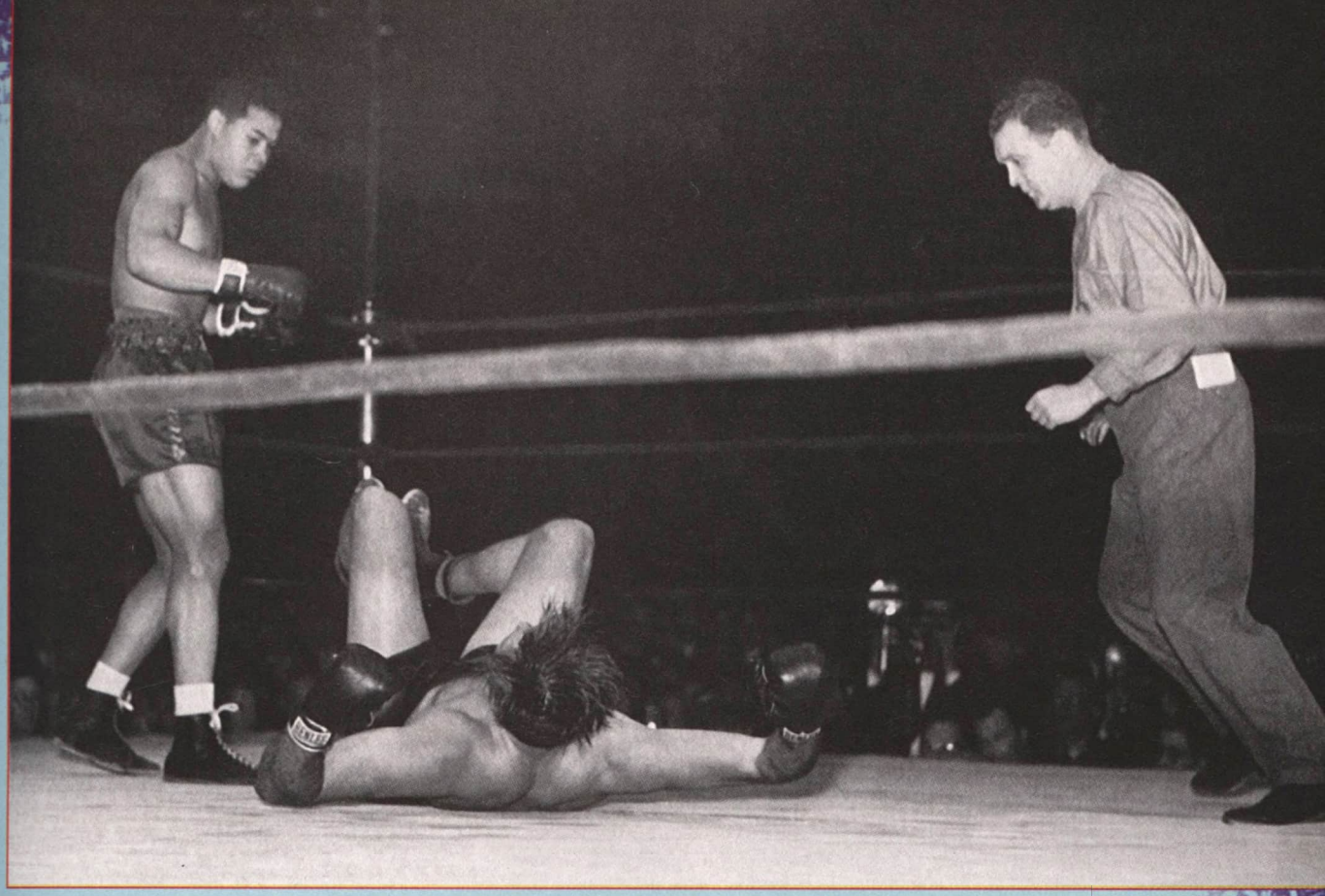
We've since been encouraged to blame venal, racist promoters like Tex Rickard, or society more generally, for this injustice, but several of the world champions deserve to share in the shame. Of the post-Johnson champions, Willard, Dempsey, and Max Baer openly refused to defend their titles against black heavyweights. Tunney managed to go through his entire 84-fight career without ever fighting a black man!

So when Louis turned professional in 1934, John Roxborough and Julian Black, the small-time black hustlers who managed him, instructed him to be the antithesis of Johnson, an unthreatening presence for white America. So, no photographs with white women, no alcohol, no gloating over beaten opponents, no flamboyance. Joe maintained his poker face in the ring, and beyond it, he let his managers do most of his talking. Perhaps most significantly, he kept his prolific womanizing out of the public gaze.

From his first meeting with his promoter, Mike Jacobs, he knew what he was up against. "He told me then," Louis later said, "that there was a color line, a gentleman's agreement, that there wouldn't be another colored world champion." Jacobs was prepared to break it, providing Louis played the game.

Louis quickly became a huge attraction. His fight with ex-champion Baer, after just 14 months as a professional, drew a crowd of more than 88,000. But this public appeal did not stop the racist stereotyping, occasional abuse, and campaigns to unseat him. Jack Dempsey, for example, staged a "White Hope" tournament to find a Caucasian to beat The Brown Bomber, and when Schmeling pulled it off in 1936, Dempsey declared this "the finest thing to happen in boxing for a long time."

To get the title shot (in preference to Schmeling) Louis' management had to sign away a 10 percent share of future purses to the world champion, Jim Braddock, and even then, for a few moments, it



Louis donated his entire purse from the second Buddy Baer fight to the Naval Relief Fund

looked like all the careful planning might come to nothing, because Louis was dropped in the opening round. But he picked himself up, took over, and won the title on an eighth-round knockout.

It took another year before Louis achieved hegemony. As he put it on stopping Braddock: "Don't call me champ until I knock out Schmeling."

Schmeling was the darling of Nazi Germany, and America was preparing for war with Germany, so the significance of their return fight took on gargantuan proportions. In the buildup, President Franklin D. Roosevelt was quoted as saying: "Joe, we need muscles like yours to beat Germany." After finishing off Schmeling in 124 seconds in front of more than 70,000 people at Yankee Stadium, Louis' first words were: "You can call me champ now."

This victory transformed Louis from hero for black America to being an all-American hero. It built his standing in white America, and opened the way for other black boxers, such as Ray Robinson, and other sports stars such as baseball's Jackie Robinson.

Most of Louis' fights from then on were Bum of the Month fare, although there were occasional scares along the way, including a split decision win over Arturo Godoy and a near defeat against Billy Conn.

He donated the purses from his return fights with Buddy Baer and Abe Simon to the Army and Navy relief funds, and then joined the Army, announcing, "I have only done what any red-blooded American would do. We gonna do our part, and we will win because we are on God's side." Joe spent the next four years doing PR work and boxing exhibitions, and when he returned to fighting in 1946, he was a faded force. But his status as an all-American hero was complete. In response to a patronizing quip that Joe was a "credit to his race," pro-Louis sportswriter Jimmy Cannon responded: "Louis is a credit to his race—the human race."

In the end, Louis reigned for 11 years, 8 months, and made 25 defenses, both records still standing. But the rest of the Joe Louis story is rather sad. Brutal defeats by Ezzard Charles and Rocky Marciano, crippling tax problems that pushed him into professional wrestling, cocaine and heroin addiction, multiple lawsuits, extreme paranoia leading to him being sectioned to a psychiatric hospital, and finally a heart attack, three strokes, and death at the age of 66.

But his contribution to boxing history, black history, and sporting history was immense. When he died, one of the eulogies was delivered by Jesse Jackson, who said: "Usually the champion rides on the shoulders of the nation and its people, but in this case, the nation rode on the shoulders of its hero."

BENNY "KID" PARET'S TELEVISED DEATH

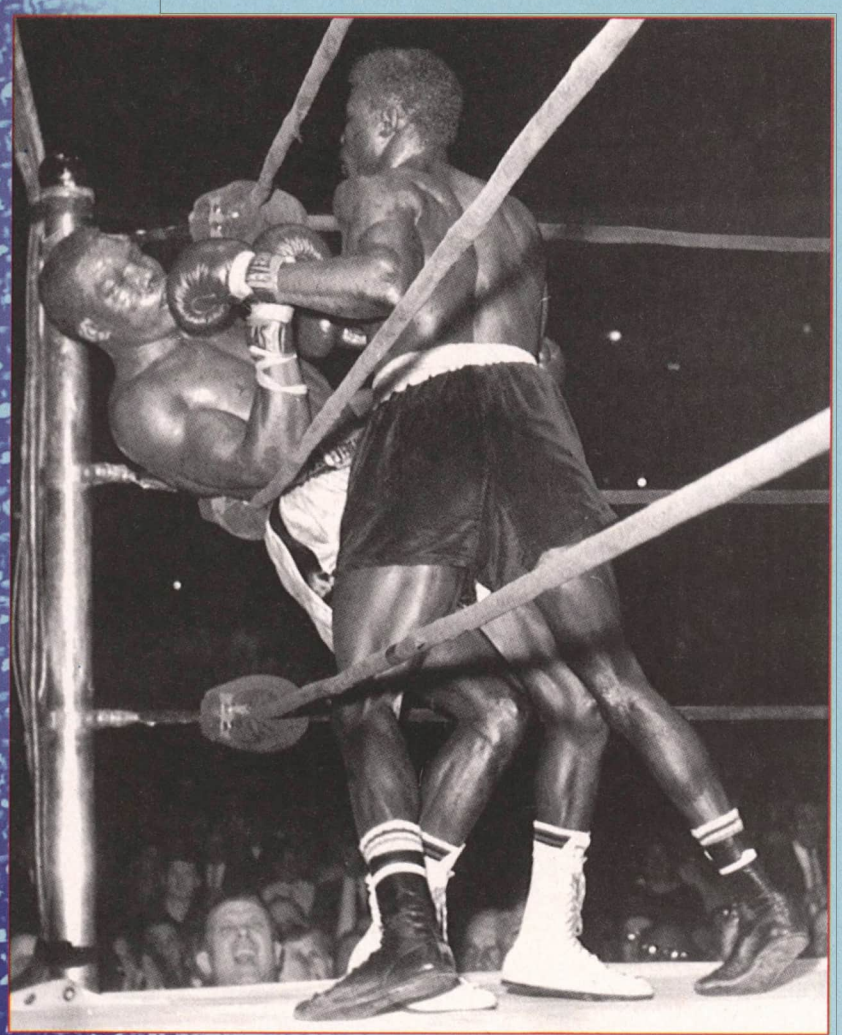
Death and boxing have been constant companions, going all the way back to the Ancient Greeks. And when these deaths have involved champions and their challengers, they have often had significant consequences for the sport.

When George Stevenson died after losing to Jack Broughton, the winner introduced the bare-knuckle game's first set of rules. Its second set of rules was also prompted by death in the ring. America's first recorded ring death occurred in rural New York in 1842, when Tom McCoy died after 160 minutes of bare-knuckle fighting with Chris Lilly. The impact: Boxing was outlawed, which led it to going underground.

The first death in a world title fight saw American bantamweight Jimmy Barry coming from behind to knock out Walter Croot in the 20th round, at London's National Sporting Club in 1897. Croot was pronounced dead a few days later, and Barry and the club's officials were tried for manslaughter, but eventually acquitted.

Five world heavyweight champions killed men in the ring—Bob Fitzsimmons, Jess Willard, Primo Carnera, Max Baer, and Ezzard Charles—but no ring death has a greater public impact than Benny "Kid" Paret's at the hands of Emile Griffith at Madison Square Garden, on March 24, 1962. The reason relates partly to the brutal ending to the fight that left Paret in a coma, but mainly to the fact that the fight was screened live on television, the first time a ring death had been screened to such a large audience.

Millions of Americans watched on TV as Griffith pounded Paret into a coma



The rivalry between the Cuban Paret and the New York-based Virgin Islander Griffith was intense. In their first fight, a year earlier, Griffith, who was not known for his punching power, knocked out Paret in the 13th. Six months later Paret got his revenge with a controversial split decision that Griffith bitterly disputed, to regain the world welterweight title.

Two months after that bout, Paret challenged Gene Fullmer for the world middleweight title, and in the 10th round was down three times before being counted out, after taking a severe beating. But just over three months later, he was back, for the rubber match with Griffith.

At the weigh-in, Paret insulted Griffith's sexuality by calling him a "maricon" (faggot), and the Virgin Islander had to be restrained from attacking him on the spot.

Paret dropped Griffith in the sixth round, and when Griffith was saved by the bell, the Cuban put his glove on his hip and blew a kiss at his rival. In the 12th, Griffith drove

Paret's brother, Antonio, tries to comfort their mother at the boxer's funeral

Paret into a corner and pounded him with a rapid-fire blur of punches. Paret started to collapse, but his right arm hooked onto the ropes, preventing him from falling. Referee Ruby Goldstein, who'd recently recovered from a heart attack, froze, allowing Griffith to landed 23 unanswered punches before he finally stepped in. Paret fell into a coma and died 10 days later.

The fight was screened live on NBC's popular *Friday Night Fights* series and watched by millions of shocked Americans. It prompted legislative hearings and the New York district attorney threatened to investigate Goldstein for criminal negligence, while the outcry prompted NBC to cancel the series and withdraw from boxing.

The damage to the sport's reputation was exacerbated a year later when, in another televised bout, Davey Moore died two days after his world featherweight title defense against Sugar Ramos, his neck dramatically hitting the bottom rope after a 10th-round knockdown, prompting a fatal whiplash injury to his brain stem.

Since then, the ring death that has most impacted boxing featured the extremely popular American, Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini, who was making the second defense of the WBA lightweight belt against inexperienced, weight-drained Korean Duk Koo Kim in Las Vegas in November 1982. By round 14 of the televised fight, Kim was spent and Mancini dropped him. The fight was stopped, but a few minutes later, Kim collapsed and went into a coma. He died five days later.

Both the referee and Kim's mother committed suicide after the fight, and the bout had profound implications for the sport. The WBC decided to restrict bouts to 12 rounds, and the WBA and IBF soon followed their lead (although the prime motivation may have been that 12 rounds made more sense in terms of television scheduling).

In addition, the number of ring ropes was increased from three to four, and over the next few years, prefight medicals became more strenuous. Boxers had to go through more stringent tests before being licensed, while in some states and countries, ambulances and emergency medical teams had to be on standby for all professional fights.

After 1991, six-ounce gloves were no longer used in the lighter weights, and to prevent dehydrated boxers from entering the ring (a prime cause of brain injury), prefight weigh-ins were held at least 24 hours before fight time (in practice, often 30 hours, which meant that the fight weight of a boxer could be anything up to 20 pounds more than their weigh-in figure, an unintentional consequence that has many observers rethinking the validity of the practice).

Still, despite all these added protections, ring deaths, along with life-threatening comas, and long-term brain damage, remain an integral part of the sport. One reason is that contemporary boxers are, on average, stronger and harder hitting than their counterparts from previous generations, and throw more punches per round. But the overriding reason is that boxing is a sport that involves hitting people's heads, and, hard as this is for a boxing magazine to admit—heads are not really designed to be hit.

THE ALI ERA

When Cassius Clay turned professional in October 1960, soon after winning the Olympic light heavyweight gold medal in Rome, the game was going through a slump. The golden age of televised boxing was drawing to a close, the world heavyweight title was being shared between two men who were not the best in the world, and in the lighter weights the stellar runs of Sugar Ray Robinson, Willie Pep, and Sandy Saddler had come to an end.

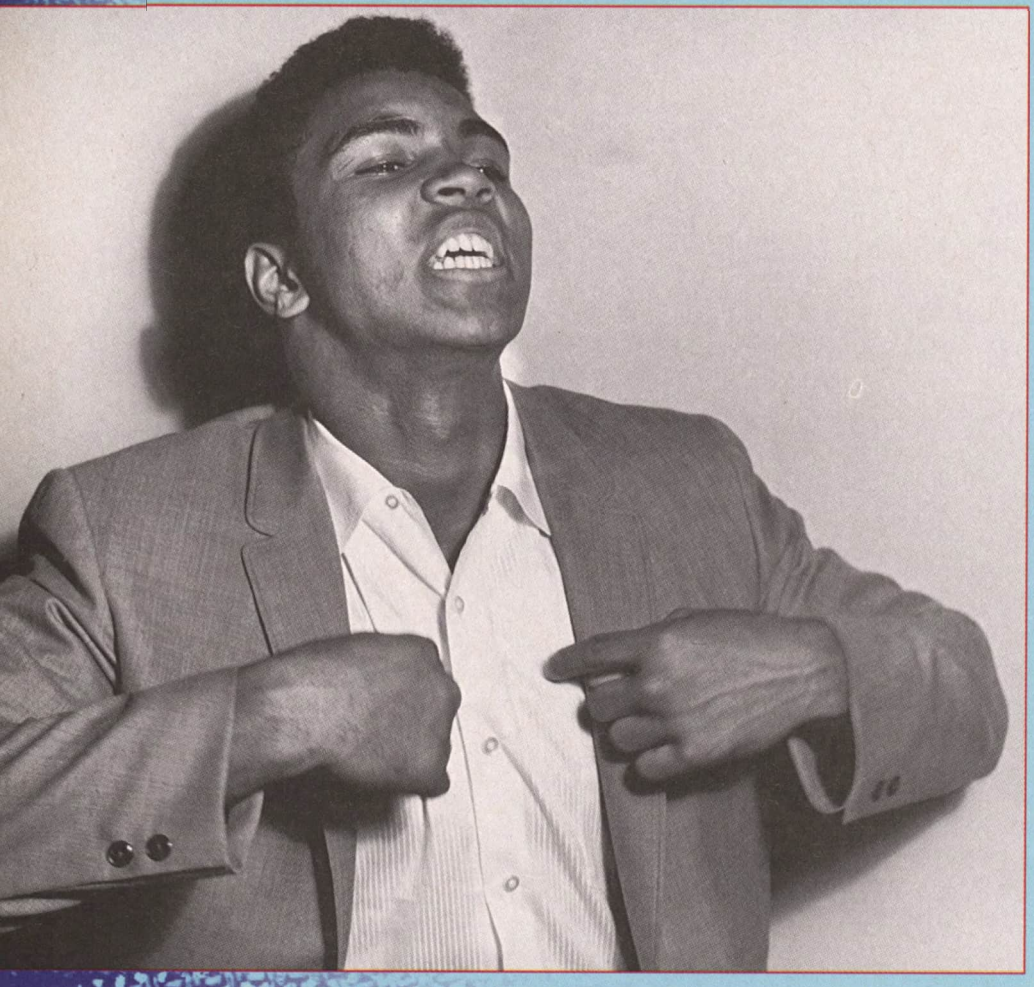
Right from the start, this brash, handsome newcomer offered something fresh, a boxer of the new era: witty, exuberant, self-promoting, and always good for a quote, sometimes delivered in the form of result-predicting doggerel. So when he shocked the world in 1964 by forcing Sonny Liston to quit on his stool, Clay was more than simply the new world champion. He became a new kind of champion, a kind never before seen in boxing, or in sport.

At that point, Clay became Muhammad Ali, the poster boy for the Nation of Islam, and his playful relationship with the white public ended abruptly. For a while, he was transformed into a hate figure, and, like Jack Johnson, took cruel delight in toying with the opposition sent to unseat him. Between May 1965 and March 1967, Ali made nine title defenses, his brilliance in the ring becoming ever-more dazzling.

Ali was at the peak at the age of 25 when, having announced, "I ain't got no quarrel with them Vietcong," he refused the draft and was unjustly stripped of his title and placed in a state of professional limbo for more than three years. In this period, he made over 200 anti-war speeches, many at university campuses, not a role that any other boxer had contemplated previously.

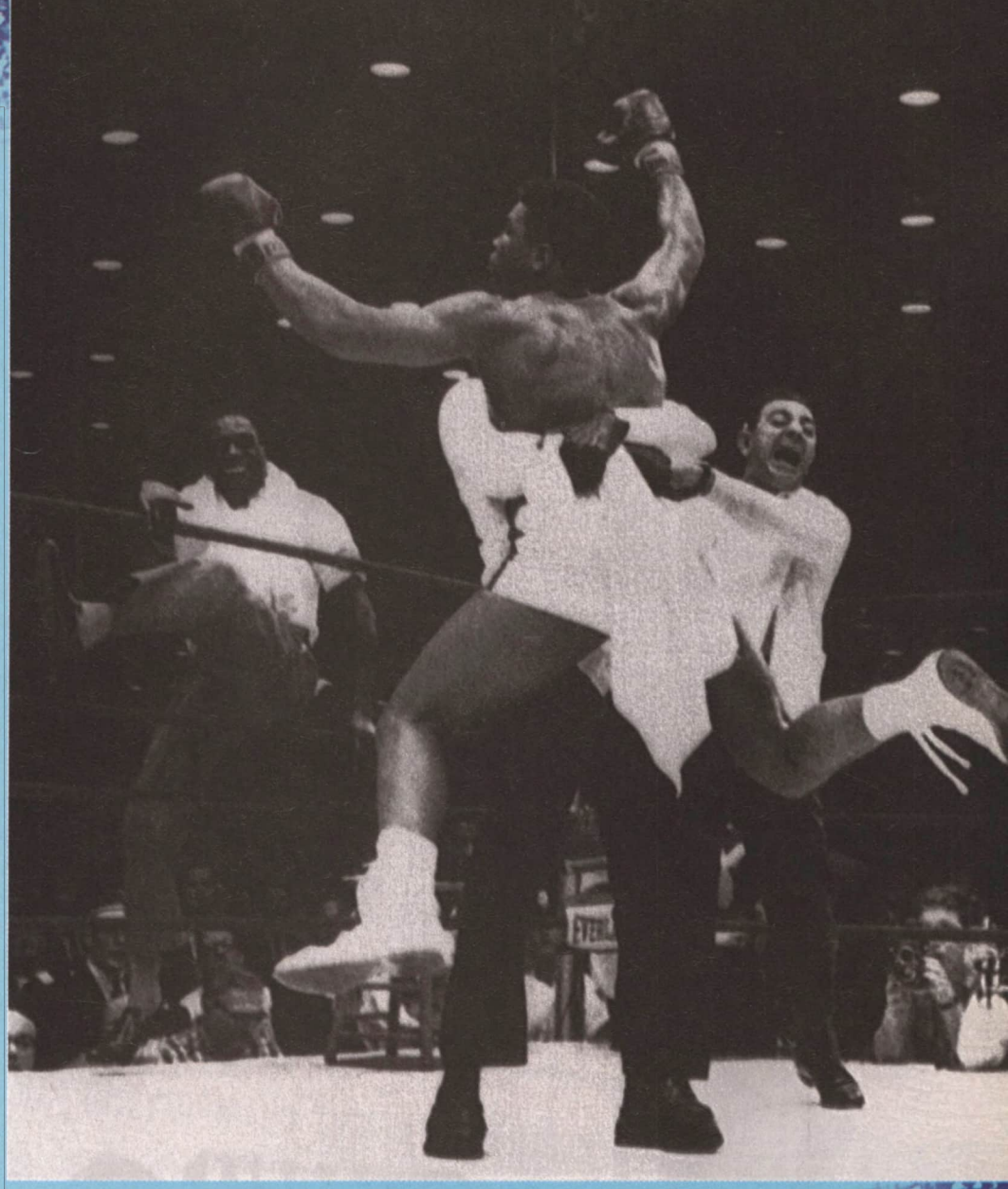
The next stage coincided with the winding down of the Vietnam War and saw Ali mutating into a new role—the much-beloved man of the people—and with each new ring drama his standing grew, even while his boxing talent diminished.

Ali was unlike anything the sport had ever seen before



The Ali who lost on points to Joe Frazier in the 1971 "Fight Of The Century," just five months after beginning his comeback, was not a patch on the 1967 version, and although he picked it up from there, Ali never regained the astonishing speed and reflexes of his earlier years. But he was always one for innovation, and so he introduced new elements—covering up and fighting off the ropes, holding his opponents' heads, fighting in bursts.

He did not always train hard, but won 10 in a row, mostly against genuine contenders, while Frazier put the title on ice. Ali had his jaw broken by Ken Norton, but, chastened, returned to his peak weight of 212 pounds and claimed revenge over Norton, then Frazier, and finally, in his greatest achievement in the ring, he upset the peak George Foreman to regain the title.



Ali leaps into the arms of a cornerman moments after winning the heavyweight title in 1964

Ali's idiosyncratic eighth-round knockout victory in the "Rumble In The Jungle" would have been a fitting note for retirement, absolute vindication and this time with America and the rest of the world behind him.

But there were still several acts left to play. The most compelling was his rubber match victory over a highly motivated Frazier in the stifling heat of Manila in October 1975. Assuming he would handle "Smokin' Joe" with ease, Ali spent his time carousing with his mistress and arrived out of shape for one of the most brutally magnificent fights in boxing history. With a supreme effort of the will, Ali came back in the late rounds to close his rival's eyes and punch him to a standstill, until Frazier's trainer, Eddie Futch, would not allow him out for the 15th round.

As Ali later put it, "Frazier quit just before I did." But the fight left its mark on both men: Neither was the same again. Astonishingly, in retrospect, Ali managed six more defenses although in three of them, he was fortunate to get the nod. But finally, in 1978, a pale shadow of the once-great champion was beaten by the seven-fight novice Leon Spinks. He regained the title again, but from then on it was downhill, a brief retirement followed by a horrible loss to Larry Holmes and finally, a month before his 40th birthday, a points loss to Trevor Berbick.

By then, Ali was slurring his speech, a condition no doubt exacerbated by punches to the head, but later diagnosed as Parkinson's disease. Having leached him of his money, his entourage evaporated, his third marriage ended, and he virtually disappeared. But then it began to turn around. Ali remarried, this time successfully, his business affairs were brought under order, and the visitors returned, entertained by his magic tricks, practical jokes, and self-deprecating wit. And then, in the 1990s, he made his way back to public consciousness, starting with the Oscar winning documentary on the Foreman fight *When We Were Kings*, followed by the biopic *Ali*, and his poignant speech at the post-9/11 fundraiser.

Today, Ali's contribution to his sport is clear: He changed it forever, through his stylistic influence and through enabling other boxers to find their voices. His wider image is also falling into place, resembling a classical epic—unexpected triumph followed by a stand of high principle, leading to intense adversity, exile, defeat, and a bumpy road to vindication. And then, in the final act, a slide downward reversed by a phoenix-like rebirth and a different kind of triumph.

BOXING INFECTED WITH ALPHABET DISEASE

Divided spoils have long been a feature of boxing when it comes to world titles. Between 1908 and 1915, for example, welterweight honors were split up between a string of rival claimants, and between 1931 and 1941 the middleweight title was divided between titlists recognized by the New York State Athletic Commission and those recognized by the National Boxing Association (a forerunner of the WBA).

But for the most part, there was one champion in each of eight weight divisions, and at least the heavyweight division seemed sacrosanct. This, incidentally, created problems of its own, with mob-backed promotional consortiums controlling titles, freezing out anyone whose face didn't fit or who wouldn't play the game. As a result, some of the finest fighters of all-time never fought for world titles, including Sam Langford, Jim Driscoll, and Charlie Burley.

But in 1965, the alphabet plague started to morph into new and ever-more-venal forms. It began with an act of outrageous cheek: the move by the WBA (formed in 1962) to strip Muhammad Ali of his world title, using the excuse that he had broken their rules by agreeing to a rematch with Sonny Liston.

The WBA title was contested between Eddie Machen, who'd lost to Floyd Patterson last time out, and 6'6", 199-pound beanpole Ernie Terrell, who at least had managed a winning run after getting knocked out by Cleveland Williams less than three years earlier.

Terrell used his long jab to win widely and picked up a couple of defenses before finally agreeing to take on Ali in what the WBA regarded as a unification bout. Ali tortured him mercilessly over 15 rounds to restore the natural order. But it didn't take long for the WBA to strip Ali again, following the absurd lead of the NYSAC when Ali announced his opposition to the war in Vietnam and refused the draft.

Terrell poses with his guitar in front of a poster for his bogus "championship" bout with Machen

And so it continued, divided titles, bent ratings, and evidence of corruption. For example, promoter Bob Arum admitted to paying bribes to a Puerto Rican fixer, Pepe Cordero, who he called "the WBA's bagman."

Another control group, the World Boxing Council, was formed in 1963, to become the biggest noodle in the alphabet soup. It soon showed itself capable of matching the WBA when it came to self-serving, money-grubbing decisions contrary to the interests of the sport. It would be impossible to provide a representative list of the dirty dealings of Jose Sulaiman's Mexican-based

Don King with Lee (top) and with Sulaiman (above)

business, but among them are the blatant favoritism shown to Don King for many years and the nepotism shown toward Mexican fighters (not least Julio Cesar Chavez, who was given the benefit of several doubts).

But just as Al Capone got away with murder, but finally went down for the relatively minor crime of tax evasion, so, in a sense, it has been for the WBC.

When Roy Jones announced he was relinquishing his WBC light heavyweight title, Graciano Rocchigiani beat Michael Nunn for the vacant belt. Then Jones changed his mind, so the WBC reinstated him, informing Rocchigiani there'd been a typo and he wasn't really champion. The German sued in a U.S. federal court and won $30-million in damages. Faced with bankruptcy, the chastened WBC settled, leaving it rather poorer than before.

In 1983, a third player, the International Boxing Federation, made its unwelcome arrival. When America's Bob Lee failed in his bid to unseat WBA President Gilberto Mendoza, Lee formed the IBF, which soon showed itself to be even more nakedly corrupt than its rivals. Lee put a price on the commodities sold by his business: $10,000 to get a boxer rated; $100,000 for a heavyweight title shot, and most of the major promoters fell into line. He was eventually convicted of racketeering charges, money laundering, and tax fraud.

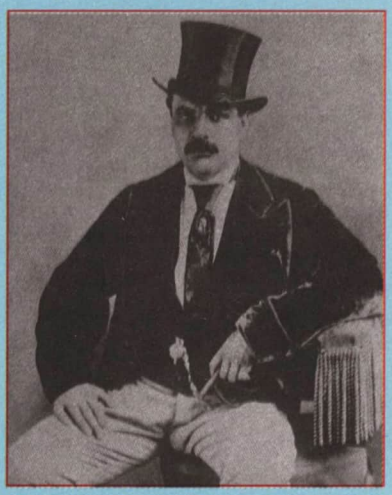
When the Puerto Rico-based WBO was formed as yet another WBA-breakaway in 1988, the boxing world was becoming sick of the proliferation of control bodies, and so there was a reluctance to allow it to join the ranks of the big three, not least because one of its prime movers was the former WBA bagman, Pepe Cordero. Its ratings were even more absurd than those of its rivals. To take just one example, in 2001, the WBO twice moved a dead man, one Darrin Morris, up their super middleweight rankings.

The impact of these belt-selling businesses has been dire for boxing. Not content to sell so-called world titles, they have added new products for sucking the blood from the sport: "interim" world titles, "super" titles, and a variety of "international" titles, all attracting sanctioning fees, to the point where nobody, not even the saddest obsessive, could possibly name all the champions in what are now 17 weight divisions.

But, finally, the alphabet organizations' influence seems to be waning. A-list boxers and their promoters are starting to join THE RING in tiring of the alphabet charade, and to hold world title bouts and other major bouts without the official sanction of alphabet organizations, when the champion holds a RING Magazine belt. They seem to have cottoned on to the idea that the fans don't give a damn about trinkets; what they want are good, competitive fights. It's still a trickle at the top end of the game, but it's a sign of hope.

HONORABLE MENTION

1860 The first international superfight: 6'2", 195-pound U.S. champion John Heenan sailed to England to take on 5'8½", 152-pound English champion Tom Sayers—a huge, underground event attended by Dickens, Thackeray, MPs, and aristocrats. Sayers dominated early, but wilted after 37 rounds, prompting English fans to storm the ring and cut the ropes. Soon after, the bout was declared a draw. After this, international title bouts became a regular occurrence.



Mace helped spread the popularity of boxing around the world

1869 Colonialism spreads boxing throughout the world: Boxing spread to the New World throughout the 19th century, with English champion Jem Mace taking on much of the load (from 1869, traveling to America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa). Later, boxing spread to other parts of the British Empire (Central Africa, Thailand, Jamaica), to France's African colonies, and various Asian nations (Japan, Philippines) by U.S. military intervention.

1922 The birth of The Ring: The contribution of The Ring lay both in its coverage of boxing and in its policy of rating fighters and awarding world title belts, which introduced much-needed clarity. Founded by Nat Fleischer (editor until his death 50 years later), it became and remains the most authoritative publication in boxing.

1938 Henry Armstrong and multiple weight champions: Bob Fitzsimmons was the first triple champion, but "Homicide Hank" raised the bar by holding three titles at the same time: featherweight, welterweight, and lightweight, all within a 10-month spell. Several boxers have since become titleholders in more than three divisions, but none have come close to duplicating Armstrong's feat.

1963 The advent of casino boxing: Promoter Mel Greb linked casinos with boxing when he hired the Las Vegas Convention Center for fight cards in the early-1960s. The venue and Las Vegas itself came into its own for the second Liston-Patterson fight in July 1963. Soon, casinos joined in and this shifted the financial structure of boxing, with casinos paying large site fees, providing free room and board for the fighters and their entourages, as well as offering boxing as incentives to high rollers.

1989 The formation of the International Boxing Hall of Fame: All American-based sports have their halls of fame, and boxing joined in the fun when residents of Canastota, New York, raised funds for the IBHOF. The institution has flourished and is respected throughout the sport, with the annual inductions a major event on the calendar.

1992 The spread of professional boxing to the Eastern Bloc: The Berlin Wall came down in 1989, the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, and several of its states won independence, prompting the injection of top Eastern Bloc amateurs into professional boxing. ■

Mike Tyson addresses the media at casino press conference

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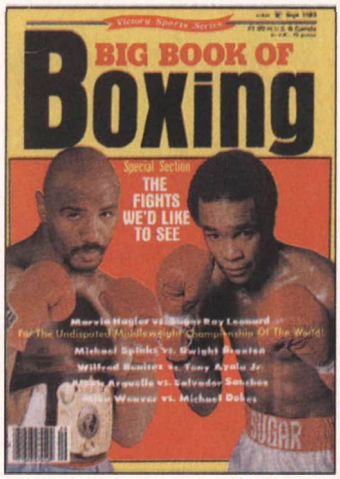

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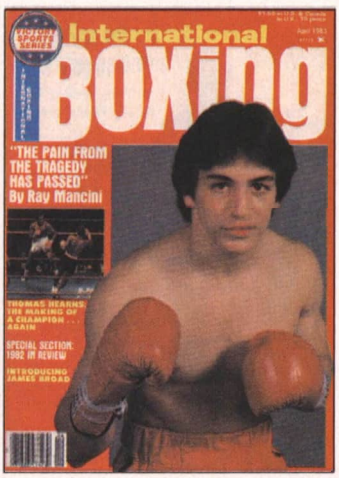

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HOLM, SWEET HOLM

WELL, OUTSIDE THE RING, MAYBE

By Don Stewart

Maybe there's a competitive gene that science has yet to discover. It was just four years ago that Tammy Bredy picked up a bow for the first time in three decades. Practicing almost every day, Bredy quickly developed into a champion, winning an age-group archery crown at the New Mexico State Games and several outdoor titles at various meets.

The 53-year-old's competitive fire hasn't been lost on her better-known daughter. Holly Holm wasn't exactly a fight fan growing up, and she found the sport almost by mistake. But the rising star has quickly developed into possibly the top female boxer on the planet.

"My parents were taught and have

PHOTO BY MARY ANN OWEN

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Junior middleweight Holm drives the previously undefeated Sanders into the ropes with a right hand during their recent match in Holm's hometown of Albuquerque, New Mexico. The 26-year-old southpaw beat Sanders by unanimous decision via scores of 97-93 and 98-92 (twice).

always taught us kids that if you're passionate about it, go for it," Holm said. "Don't be a quitter and focus on it. Pick something you enjoy and you love; don't just do whatever. Then you're going to want to do well and you're going to work hard."

Bredy has been known to take down massive elk with her bow and arrows. Like her mother, Holm consistently aims for the biggest game the still-growing sport has to offer. The Albuquerque, New Mexico, native hasn't missed yet.

It's getting tougher to ignore the 26-year-old welterweight, and not just because she's so easy on the eyes. Taking on all comers, Holm, 22-1-2 (6), has easily decisioned such notables as Christy Martin, Chevelle Hallback, Mia St. John, Ann Saccurato, and, most recently, previously unbeaten Mary Jo Sanders.

Outpointing the much-respected Sanders, who dropped down from middleweight to meet Holm at 154, cemented her place among the top names in the female ranks. Holm's team, which includes promoter Lenny Fresquez, believes she has the assets to be a true crossover star, the type of that can lift women's boxing to a higher level of mainstream respectability.

"My goal, and I never would have thought about it when she first walked into the gym, is to make her the face of women's boxing," said longtime trainer-manager Mike Winkeljohn. "It's just a matter of making her a household name, getting her out there."

That will be no easy feat, even for an athlete as charismatic as Holm.

Around for many years, women's boxing reached a peak in popularity in the late-1990s. Martin thrust it into mainstream consciousness with her vicious six-round win against Deirdre Gogarty on the otherwise forgettable Mike Tyson-Frank Bruno pay-per-view in March 1996.

"The Coalminer's Daughter" found herself on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* a month later, and she remained a fixture on Don King undercards for the next few years. Meanwhile, Laila Ali left the beauty shop business in '99 to follow in her father's footsteps, and in 2001 she beat Jacqui Frazier-Lyde in a bout that pitted the daughters of the two heavyweight greats.

Ali replaced Martin as the top female star in the sport, but major promoters gradually began to cool on the women's fight game in the United States, even as North American amateur programs began producing females with stronger pedigrees. It didn't help that a handful of potential superfights, such as Ali-Anne Wolfe and Martin-Lucia Rijker, never happened.

Nowadays, Ali and Wolfe are retired, Rijker is busy doing other things, and Martin is still fighting at age 40. It's a

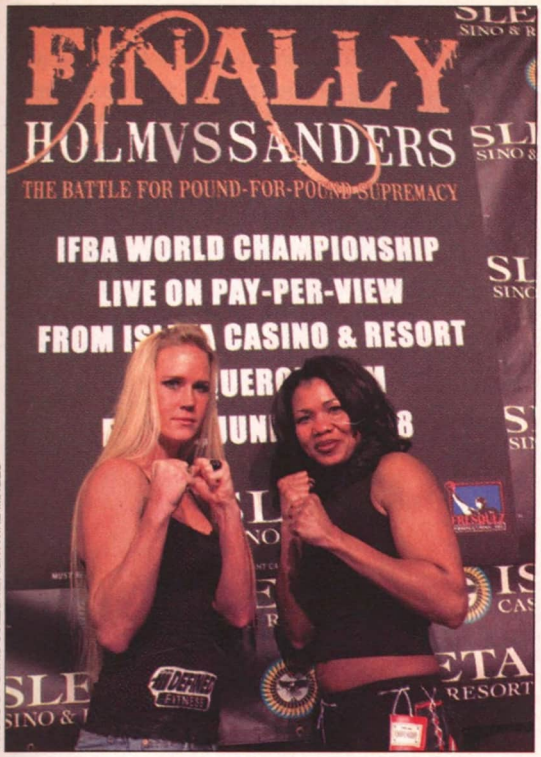

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Despite the quality of the match and its importance to female boxing, the Holm-Sanders fight was relegated to a minor pay-per-view card, a situation that typifies the current state of women's boxing in the United States.

transitional period in the women's game, with arguably better skilled stars such as Holm and Vegas slugger Melinda Cooper taking over. But it's not easy to catch the new generation of champs: Holm-Sanders was a megabout in women's boxing, but it was relegated to minor pay-per-view.

Mary Ann Owen, a veteran boxing journalist and the author of the forthcoming book *Extraordinary Women Of The Ring*, compares the plight of female boxers today to the struggles of their counterparts in tennis, golf, basketball, and soccer. Even after Title IX was enacted in 1972, it still took decades for female athletes in those sports to hit the mainstream. "With any women's sport," Owen said, "there's always a struggle through the years."

Owen believes female fighters just need the right opportunities to show their stuff on bigger stages. She feels that Holm, in particular, could be the transcendent star the sport needs, if given the chance to shine.

"This girl is not only beautiful, but she's very talented," Owen said. "And after a hard 10-round fight, she does a back flip. She's an anomaly. She's hard to describe unless you see her fight. Her opponents can't do anything when they fight her because she's awkward, but she's awkward in a good way.

"It's not all about Holly; it's about what she stands for. She's the hottest thing right now in female boxing."

The biggest knock on Holm has been that she seems tied to New Mexico. Only two of her 25 bouts have been held outside the Land of Enchantment State. It's a criticism that bugs Holm, who says she'd be willing to go to Detroit for the likely rematch with Sanders.

There's not much money in women's boxing, and Holm has built such a following in her hometown that it's usually the most lucrative venue for her fights. "It's never all about the money," said Holm, who seems thoughtful and down-to-earth. "But who wants to go out of town to work for less, really?"

If an opportunity to fight elsewhere ever arises, Holm says she'll take it. Eventually, she'll need to find her way to major boxing markets such as Vegas or New York in order to approach any type of mainstream stardom.

On the plus side, Holm truly enjoys fighting, and she isn't afraid to take on anyone. Problem is, the big game is getting scarce. Luring the smaller Rijker or the larger Ali back into the ring could greatly help her name recognition, but neither scenario seems likely. Her probable path is to simply keep dominating while new challengers develop and emerge.

In the meantime, Holm could use some help from corporate America in the form of a major endorsement or two.

"We're working on it," Winkeljohn said. "We're going to get there."

Winkeljohn said Team Holm has never put much focus on the fighter's sex appeal. It's been an under-utilized asset—look what it did for Maria Sharapova—and Holm isn't offended at

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Holm shows off her boxing ability by getting inside of Sanders' punches and delivering her own blow with pinpoint accuracy. It has been said that "her opponents can't do anything when they fight her because she's awkward, but she's awkward in a good way."

the prospect of using it.

"Not at all," said Holm, who is dating MMA contender Joey Villasenor. "I don't get up in the morning, look in the mirror, and say, 'Oh, I'm hot.' When people talk about it, it's flattering. I don't want to offend any other boxers, but a lot of them think they have to look tough to be tough, I guess. I like being able to be presented as a woman and still being able to box."

Holm's unlikely path to the top of women's boxing began during an idyllic childhood in New Mexico. A preacher's daughter, she grew up with a pair of tough older brothers, Weston (now 30) and Brian (28), who didn't take it easy on her very often.

"I was always really, really competitive," Holm said, "and I always wanted to hang out with my brothers; I looked up to them. To hang out with them, I had to keep up with them. They're pretty tough."

She rode dirt bikes and became heavily involved in several sports, including gymnastics, soccer, and swimming. Then, at age 16, Holm made the fateful decision to take an aerobics class at a local gym to help her stay in shape. Her instructor happened to be Winkeljohn, who also taught kickboxing at the gym.

"I thought, *Man, you really go all out and you get to punch each other in the face*," revealed Holm. "That looks really fun. I want to try it one time and see if I like it. I didn't think I'd ever go pro. Sure enough, it became my passion."

There was no history of boxers in Holm's bloodline, and she'd never been a fan of the sport as a girl. Still, she began sparring a little less than a year after first showing up for Winkeljohn's aerobics class. A few months later, Holm had the first of her eight amateur kickboxing fights. She went on to win a national amateur kickboxing title in the fall of 2001. That winter, with female kickboxers in short supply, Holm took a pro fight in her hometown, *sans* kicking, and stopped Martha Deitchman in three rounds.

Winkeljohn, who trains several well-known mixed-martial arts combatants, says Holm has far more talent for kickboxing than for the Marquis of Queensbury version. Holm did have a handful of pro kick bouts, but if women's boxing is the little sister of the male version, female kickboxing is its orphaned cousin.

"As far as just kickboxing, it's really hard to make a dollar there, and the competition isn't as good," Holm said. "I really couldn't get any more kickboxing fights as an amateur. My first boxing match was my first pro fight."

Having already graduated from high school and left the University of New Mexico after a year ("I was pretty burned out," she said.), the intensely competitive Holm quickly found herself fighting full-time. She spent her first two years as a pro learning how to box without throwing kicks. It was a start somewhat reminiscent of how young fighters used to be developed in past

The always-tough Belinda Laracuente takes a flush left from Holm during their February 2008 bout in Temecula, California, which Holm won by a unanimous 10-round decision. It was only Holm's second fight outside of her native New Mexico.

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

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Holm originally went to the gym to take an aerobics class when she was 16, but soon turned to kickboxing, and eventually traditional boxing, in search of greater opportunities. She was THE RING's Female Fighter of the Year in 2005 and 2006.

decades, back when won-loss records didn't matter as much.

Holm won her first five fights before the more seasoned Stephanie Jaramillo held her to a six-round draw in Albuquerque. Three bouts later, competing outside of her home state for the first time as a pro, Holm walked away with a six-round majority draw against Angelica Martinez, whom she'd decisioned five months prior.

In her next outing, Holm suffered her only loss thanks to an elbow from Rita Turrisi, who was 2-4 at the time. Winkeljohn stopped it after the fourth round, with his fighter ahead on the cards, due to a massive cut under Holm's eye. "I look at everything and try to learn from it," Holm said.

Winkeljohn began working on Holm's footwork shortly after the loss. Gradually, she became less of a brawler and more of a cerebral southpaw. Holm started outsmarting and outjabbing opponents, started posting shutouts on the judges' cards, started becoming a popular draw in Albuquerque.

By 2005, Holm had earned a junior welterweight belt and enough respect from her trainer/manager that Winkeljohn accepted a fight with Martin. It was a gutsy move: Martin was an icon with 51 pro bouts, only three of which were losses, while Holm had just 13 fights.

Her toughest opponent that night turned out to be the prefight jitters. Relaxed by the end of the third round, Holm dished out a surprisingly methodical pounding. Two judges had her winning all 10 rounds. It was a breakthrough performance, the type that gave her the confidence to stand in the same ring with any opponent.

"That fight pushed me to where I needed to be," she said. "Without the Martin fight, who knows where my career would be right now."

She won 10 more times before meeting the 34-year-old Sanders, 25-1 (8), in the main event of an all-female pay-per-view card dubbed "Finally." Sanders, the daughter of NFL Hall of Famer Charlie Sanders, had won belts in four weight classes and beaten nine titleholders of differing varieties. But having been through the pressure of facing Martin so early in her career, Holm was unfazed by the challenge.

She tagged Sanders with a hard right jab on a few occasions early as her bigger, stronger opponent tried to muscle her way inside. Holm continued to use her superior technique and footwork to pile up the points, shaking off Sanders' hardest shots and often rushing in with combinations to prevent the Detroit native from setting her feet and firing off bombs.

Two judges had Holm winning eight of the 10 rounds, while the other had her taking seven. Afterward, Holm was given a pound-for-pound belt by Sue Fox, editor of the women's boxing website WBAN.com.

Nine days later, Holm finally watched the tape of the fight. A true perfectionist, she noticed several little things that she could have done to make it an even more convincing win.

"I think I could have done a lot better," Holm said. "I think I could have finished a lot better. But that's something to learn from for next time."

She's never far from the mark, but for Holm, just like her mom, it's all about hitting that proverbial bull's-eye. ■

Don Stewart covers boxing for the Reading (Pennsylvania) Eagle and is a regular contributor to THE RING.

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Oct. 1983: Is Larry Holmes Finished? Color Pinup: Greg Page. Interview: Marvis Frazier. Also: Marvin Hagler, Bobby Chacon, Jack Dempsey.

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Feb. 1986: King Michael: How Long Will He Rule The Heavyweights? Also: Barry McGuigan, Shawn O'Sullivan, Spinks-Holmes, *Rocky IV*, world's best fighter poll.

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Jan. 1993: Holyfield vs. Bowe: Who Will Win And Why. Color Pinup: Al Cole. Interview: Vinny Pazienza. Also: James Toney, Terrence Alli, Maurice Blocker.

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Dec. 1993: The *KO* Feud Rages On: "I Will Torture You!" Says Riddick Bowe To Lennox Lewis. Color Pinup: Kennedy McKinney. Also: Mississippi boxing, George Foreman, Yori Boy Campas , Carbajal-Kim, Morrison-Moorer.

June 1995: The Tug-Of-War Over Mike Tyson. Color Pinup: Wilfredo Vasquez. Interview: Oliver McCall. Also: Alejandro Gonzalez, Alexis Arguello, Kostya Tszyu.

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Aug. 1997: Oscar Reaches ... But Can't Grasp The Stars. Color Pinup: Nate Miller. Interview: Hector Camacho. Also: Norris-Trinidad preview, Hall of Fame, Angel Manfredy.

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Jan. 1998: De La Hoya Humbles The Macho Man: "Oscar's The Best I've Ever Fought." Color Pinup: William Guthrie. Interview: Mark Johnson. Also: Johnny Tapia, Pinklon Thomas, defense.

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Feb. 2005: Exclusive KO Interview—Manny Pacquiao. Also: Kostya Tszyu, Manning Galloway, quitting, perfect heavyweight.

Oct. 2005: El Feroz With A Twist: Retooled Vargas Gets Defensive. Interview: Zab Judah. Also: Marco Antonio Barrera, Jean-Marc Mormeck, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., *KO* at 25.

Feb. 2006: Can Hip Hop Revitalize Boxing? Interview: Erik Morales. Also: Zab Judah, Ricardo Mayorga, Arturo Gatti, Luis Collazo, Roman Karmazin.

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☐OCT/83	☐JAN/89	☐SEP/92	☐FEB/99	☐OCT/01
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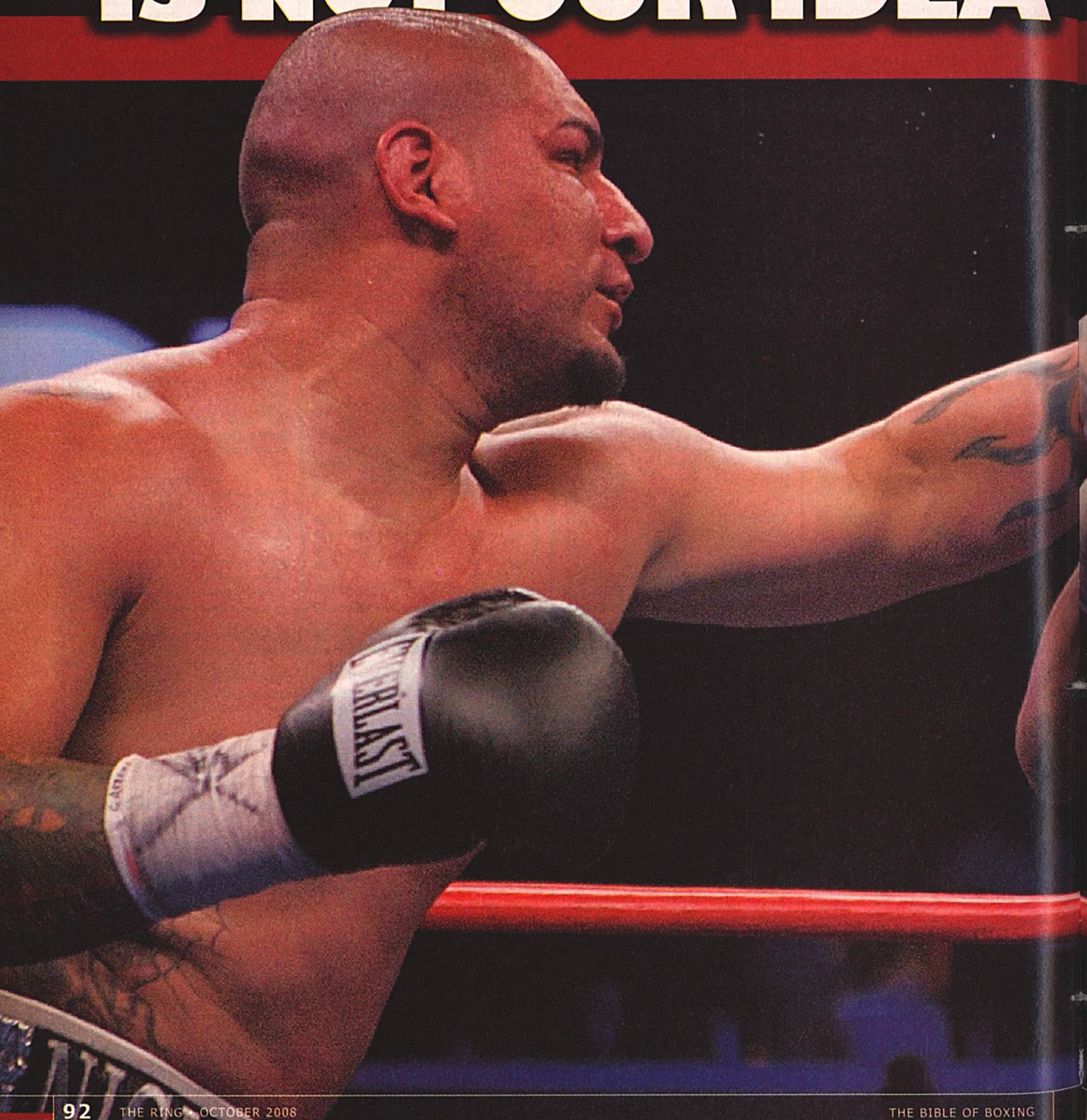
7481/05-08

An Exciting, Talented, American Heavyweight?

CHRIS ARREOLA

IS NOT OUR IDEA OF A NIGHTMARE



By William Dettloff

When Chris Arreola was a kid toddling around gyms in Southern California, his dad gave him the kind of salient advice that only interested, engaged fathers can give. "He told me that whatever I do, do it with passion," Arreola told THE RING not long after his win over Chazz Witherspoon on HBO in late-June. "He always told me that whatever it is you do, be the best you can be at it, whether it's a street sweeper or whatever. Whatever you do, do it with passion."

Arreola's father doesn't train the fighter anymore—more on

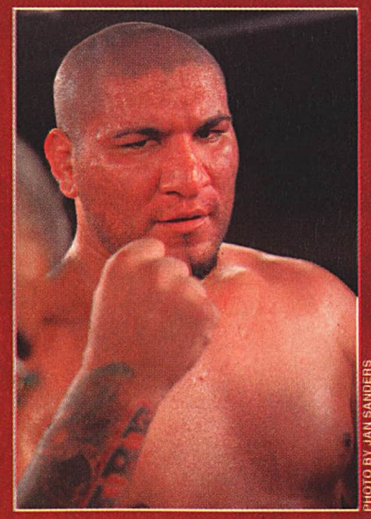


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Arreola knocks Chazz Witherspoon's head back with a jab (left) en route to his 24th consecutive pro victory. Arreola (above) is that rarest of boxing commodities—a quality heavyweight of Mexican heritage.

that later—but the message and its importance stuck with Arreola. You can see it in a literal sense, tattooed across the fighter's back, a sacred heart and a pair of wings that stretch shoulder to shoulder, and with his approach in the ring. Arreola is, when fully on his game, a relentlessly aggressive, heavy-handed pressure fighter that, almost by definition, one cannot be without being passionate. A dispassionate pressure fighter is dead in the water and Arreola, 24-0 (21), so far at least, has shown himself to be anything but.

You wouldn't know it to look at him. Arreola, even when in top condition, gives the impression of being soft around the middle and yet to lose his baby fat. It is somewhat disconcerting to learn that he is 27 already, the years long since past when it was legitimate to use that as an excuse. When prepared properly, his physique recalls a prime Tony Ayala, whose soft midsection and torso belied his power and skill. When he has been lazy in training—an early failing he assures us is behind him—he takes on the appearance of one-time heavyweight journeyman Joe Hipp, athletic and energetic despite the spare tire and love handles, but nonetheless hindered by them.

Against Witherspoon, in Memphis, Tennessee, Arreola was a relatively svelte 239. He'd still have lost a body-beautiful contest, but, fortunately for him, this was a fight and he had it all over the sculpted, 220-pound Witherspoon, a cousin of former heavyweight titleholder Tim Witherspoon. The meeting between two undefeated, fairly highly regarded heavyweight prospects is something of an anomaly these days, so it was not with disinterest that this contest was received. That it featured two *American* heavyweight prospects (an increasingly rare commodity) made it even more important. And by the time it ended in the third round, it was clear who would be moving on to bigger, more important fights in the future.

Witherspoon, 23-1 (15), opened by boxing and keeping the fight at long range, which is where he needed it to be. That worked, more or less, in the first round, but in the second, Arreola, Riverside, California, closed the distance and forced Witherspoon to fight inside. Some hellacious exchanges ensued, but once it was

PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Once Arreola got on the inside, the previously undefeated Witherspoon was in big trouble. "The Nightmare" scored two knockdowns in the third round, but saw his kayo streak come to an end when Witherspoon's cornerman entered the ring before the round was over, which resulted in their man being disqualified.

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Arreola on the attack against Zakeem Graham during their February 2007 bout in Selden, New York, which was televised on ESPN2's* Friday Night Fights. *Arreola, who has stopped 21 of 24 pro opponents, prevailed via third-round knockout.

established that Arreola would get inside, the fight was essentially over.

"I knew in the first round that I was too strong for him," Arreola said. "We both jabbed, and when mine landed, it pushed him back. And when he tried to hold me, he couldn't. I pushed him off. I want to make somebody fight my fight. He wanted to box me outside, but I imposed my will. I made him fight my fight."

That is the overarching goal of every Arreola fight, the territorial and strategic question that will determine the outcome: Can he get inside and do business? If he can, he will likely win. If he cannot, he will lose. So far, no one has been able to keep him on the losing end of that question.

Like many fighters of Mexican decent, Arreola grew up idolizing the great Julio Cesar Chavez, whose indefatigable aggression made him a legend. It's what Arreola tries to emulate.

"Chavez was a huge influence," he said. "I still watch his fights. I just watched the Meldrick Taylor fight. It showed that, eventually, pressure pays off. That's what I try to do."

It worked against Witherspoon. In the third, Witherspoon lost the all-important territorial battle, and the fight, when Arreola trapped him against the ropes and worked him over with clubbing, thudding punches. Witherspoon went down hard and managed to beat the count, but Arreola was soon all over him, looking not unlike a hungry bear tearing through a panicked gaggle of Sunday afternoon picnickers.

Witherspoon went down again at the bell, prompting his corner to enter the ring in a misguided effort to get a head start on reviving him. Referee Randy Phillips promptly disqualified Witherspoon, as was his prerogative. It wasn't an entirely satisfying ending, even to Arreola, who said he was disappointed to see his knockout streak come to an end after 11 straight kayos, but was reassured by the knowledge that "everyone knows what happened."

It was an impressive win for "The Nightmare," and established him as the likely top American heavyweight prospect, especially in view of Eddie Chambers' loss in January to Alexander Povetkin. The other notable American prospect, Kevin Johnson, hasn't fought nearly the competition Arreola has and would be a decided underdog if they were to meet.

Henry Ramirez, Arreola's trainer, said that Arreola wasn't even at his best against Witherspoon. "He was at maybe 75 percent," Ramirez said. "He had a dislocated toe. He did not do one day of roadwork for that fight. Even to get him to spar was a chore. He was hobbling around the gym."

Ramirez is an interesting story, but not in the way other trainers are. At just 32 years old, he is a baby in this business, and no doubt the envy

of many who would like to be in his shoes. It is, for him, sweet vindication. It is a job others, in the beginning, tried to steer him away from.

"No other trainers wanted him," said Ramirez, who grew up with Arreola. "They told me, 'He's not going anywhere. You're wasting your time.' I said, 'I'm young; I've got time to waste.'"

That was six years ago and now there is talk of Arreola facing David Tua or David Haye. As we went to press, a match with Tua looked like a very good possibility. Even at 35 years old, Tua represents the kind of challenge Arreola hasn't yet faced: a fighter who, like himself, is entirely dependent on coming forward and landing powerpunches. What happens then if Arreola cannot back his man up? What's Plan B? Is there one?

"If the Tua fight comes to fruition, we would absolutely have to take a different strategy and a different approach," Ramirez said. "A little more boxing from the outside. And people will be surprised—Chris is absolutely nimble on his feet."

As much as Arreola talks about the virtues of pressure and making opponents fight his fight, he acknowledges that there are times when he will have to take a different route.

"I haven't fought anyone I couldn't back up, but I've sparred guys and I just work my way around it," he said. "When I spar, I do a lot of things I haven't had to do in fights. I had a long amateur career, about 140 amateur fights. I lost about 16 times, and all were in big tournaments."

Arreola started boxing at seven years old. His dad trained fighters at a Southern California gym and little Cristobal, in his words, "kept bugging him to bring me to the gym." He relented finally, and for the next nine years Arreola was a fighter. And he loved it.

"I loved being there," he said. "The noise the speedbag makes, the heavybag, the smell of the gym, the excitement when two guys are sparring and everyone in the gym stops what they're doing to watch. I loved it."

His father worked him very hard, for reasons Arreola didn't understand at the time. "He pushed me real hard. He always told me, 'This is for your own good. This is for your own good.' And I was thinking, *I don't think this is for my own good.* But when I look back on it now, I realize it was."

Arreola's father is not involved in his son's training today. The fighter

Arreola jumps for joy as referee Kenny Bayless stops his bout with Damian Wills in the seventh round. The fight was on the Floyd Mayweather-Carlos Baldomir card in Las Vegas, which gave Arreola a high-profile showcase for his entertaining style.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

found out why father/son relationships in boxing don't work out sometimes, that egos and personalities clash in the gym, and their relationship is best kept separate from boxing.

Eventually, Arreola's childhood love affair with boxing ended, at least temporarily. He felt burnt out by boxing's demands and quit at 16. He says he didn't really have a childhood and that the daily grind of getting up, going to school, training, and going to bed wore him down. In high school, he switched to football and basketball, and didn't fight again until he was 20 years old. After another break from the sport he turned pro in 2003, to little interest. But after wins over Damian Wills (KO 7), Malcolm Tann (KO 8), and Cliff Clouser (KO 1), Arreola has established himself not only as prospect worth watching, but an exciting one, which the heavyweight division sorely needs.

"I love it. I love to fight. I love getting hit because if I'm not getting hit, then I'm not in a fight," he told HBO after beating Witherspoon. "I'm here to please everybody—the fans, everybody watching on TV. That's what it's all about."

When was the last time you heard a heavyweight talk like that? And it's not just talk. He's far from perfect in there, but it's hard to envision Arreola, with his straight-ahead, ham-handed style, ever being in a sluggish fight. He says that some of that is borne of his heritage; both of his parents were born in Mexico, and there has never been a Mexican or Mexican-American heavyweight champion.

"That definitely motivates me," he said. "To be the first Mexican heavyweight champion would be great for all Latinos. That adds a lot of motivation, and being Mexican, a warrior, when I'm sparring or when I'm in a fight, that kicks in, that machismo."

Of course, it wouldn't be a bad thing for the game if the Latino fight community, still the most ardent and loyal in America, had a successful, promising heavyweight for whom to root. You can count the Mexican heavyweight prospects that have come and gone on two hands. The one that got the closest to the throne was Manuel Ramos, whom Joe Frazier stopped in two rounds in 1968. Others include Reuben Garcia Vargas, Joey Orbillo, Abel Hernandez, Eddie "The Animal" Lopez, and Alex Garcia. That's pretty much it.

The only rival Arreola has today in this vein is hardly a rival at all—Javier Mora, who has already lost to Sultan Ibragimov, Fres Oquendo, and a pair of journeymen in Charles Davis and Charles Wilson. The travails of Mora, who is frequently in poor condition, could serve as a cautionary tale for Arreola, who says he has learned to keep his weight down and work hard by always picturing his opponent's face when he's working out.

"When I'm hitting the bag or the mitts, I think that the guy I'm fighting is doing more than me and wants to knock me out, so I have to do more than he's doing, work harder than he's working," he said. "That's my motivation."

Lately, at least, that has worked. If he can keep it up, Arreola might make things interesting for the top heavyweights. And for us. ■

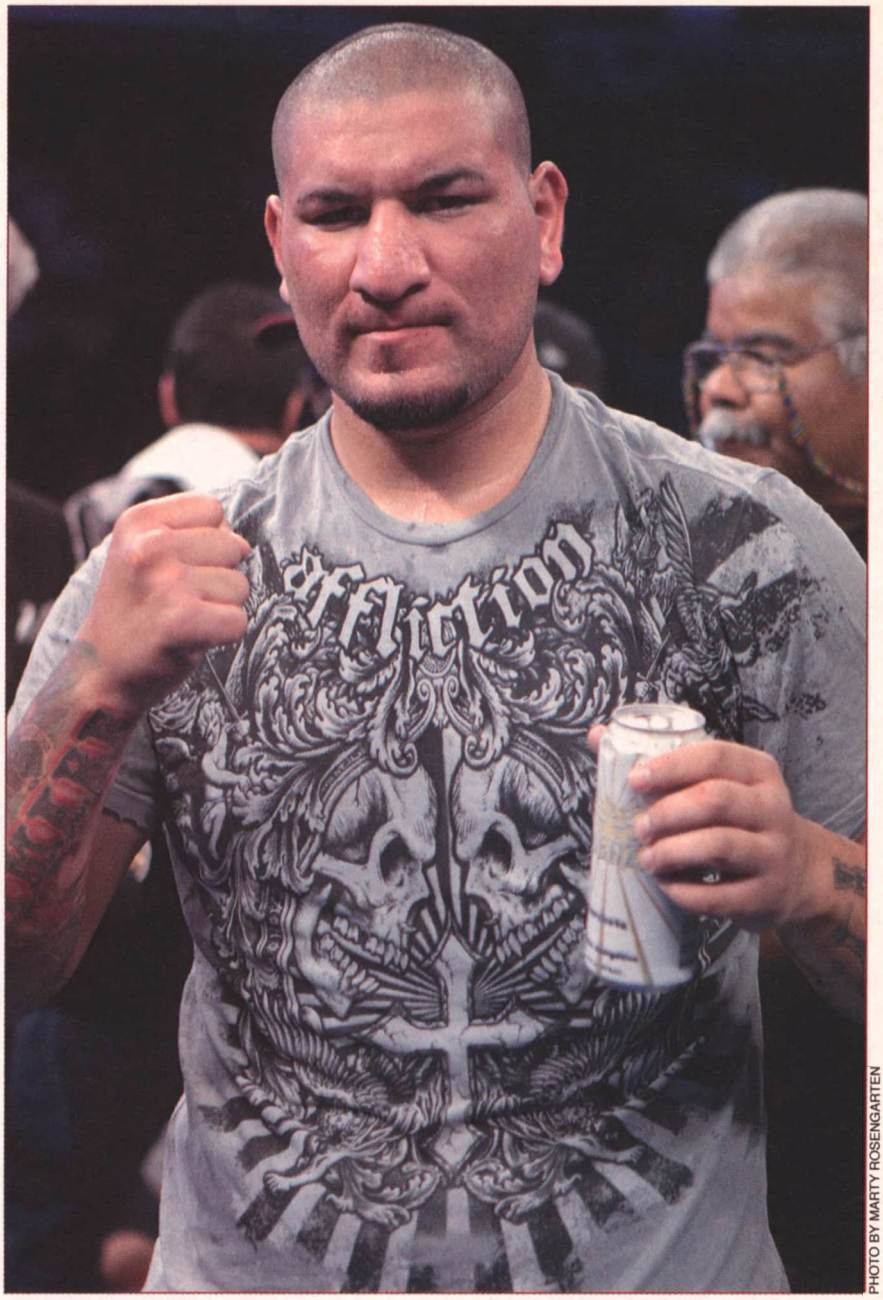


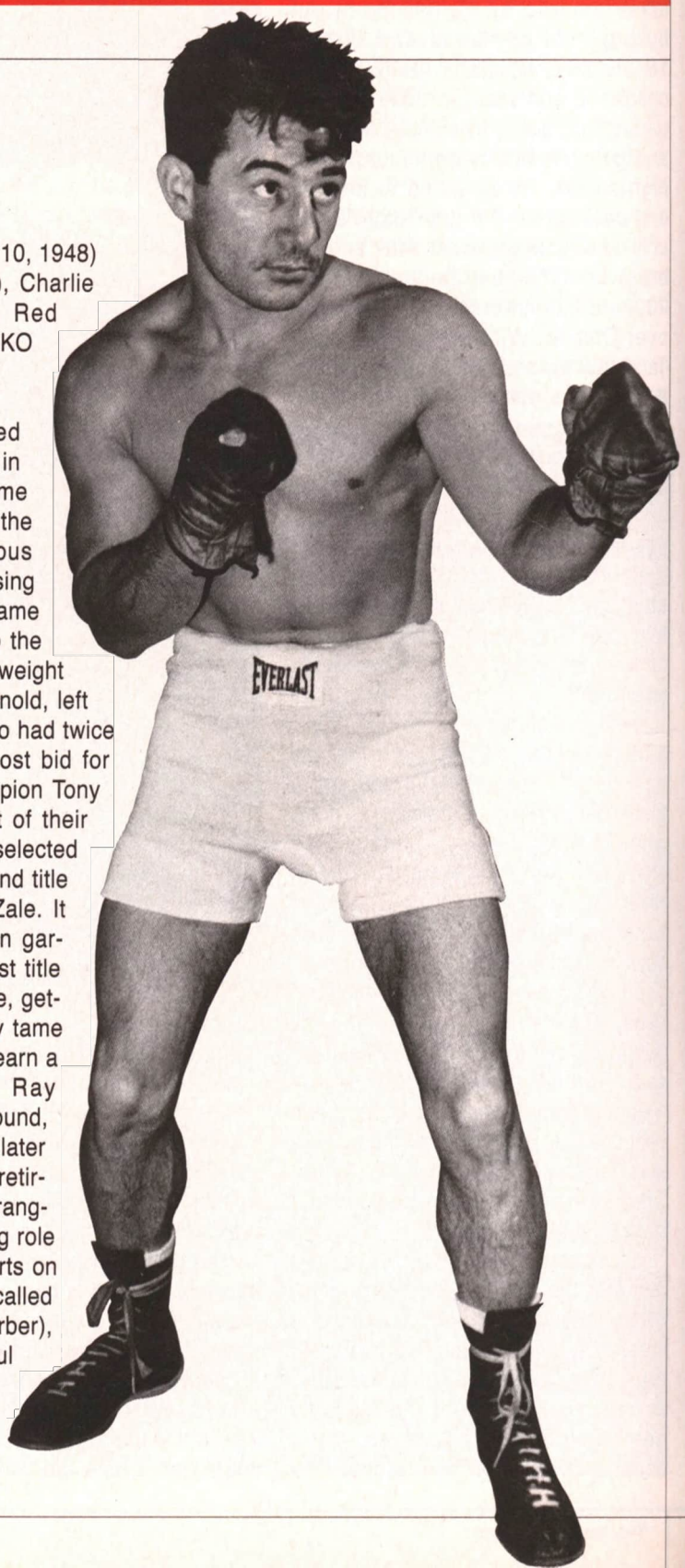
PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Arreola pictured in the immediate aftermath of his win over Witherspoon. It's too soon to know how far he can go, but just imagine how popular an all-action Mexican-American heavyweight would be.

[Hall of Fame Profile]

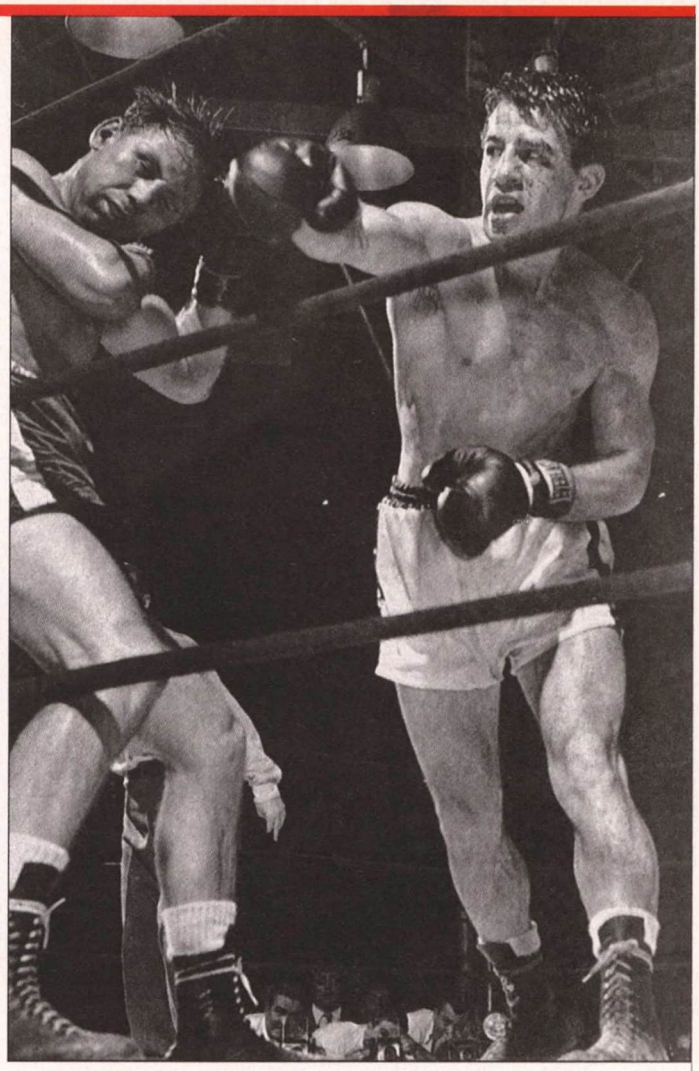
THE RING features a thumbnail biography of a ring great who has received the ultimate honor: induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York

Rocky Graziano



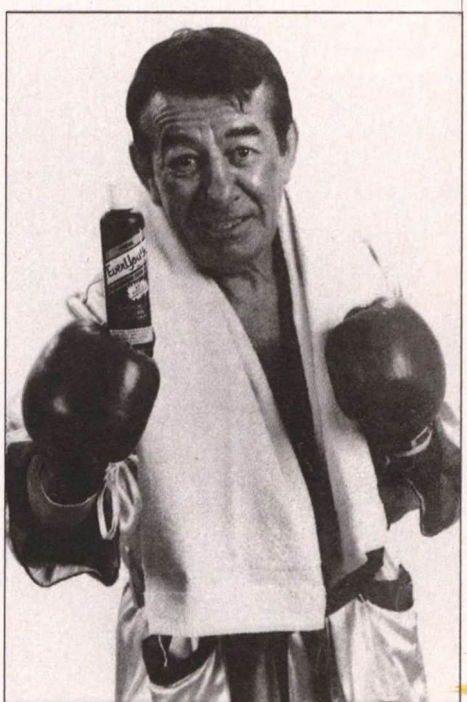
Birthdate: January 1, 1922
Birthplace: New York, New York
Date Of Death: May 22, 1990
Weight Class: Middleweight
Professional Record: 67-10-6 (52)
Title: World Middleweight (July 16, 1947-June 10, 1948)
Best Performances: Tony Zale (KO 6), Charlie Fusari (KO 10), Al "Bummy" Davis (KO 4), Red Cochrane (KO 10, KO 10), Tony Janiro (W 10, KO 10), Billy Arnold (KO 3), Marty Servo (KO 2)
Year Of IBHOF Inductions: 1991
Background: Overcame an impoverished childhood, a stint in reform school, and a stretch in military prison (for striking an officer) to become middleweight champion of the world and one of the most popular fighters of all-time ... A murderous right-hand puncher with a brawling, crowd-pleasing style, he turned pro in May 1942 and quickly became an attraction in the New York area ... Broke into the big time in '45, thanks to kayos of reigning welterweight champion Red Cochrane, knockout artist Billy Arnold, left hooker Al "Bummy" Davis, and Harold Green, who had twice beaten him by decision the previous year ... Lost bid for middleweight title in September '46, when champion Tony Zale rallied from behind to stop him in the first of their famous trilogy, a blood-soaked slugfest that was selected THE RING's Fight of the Year ... Won the 160-pound title via sixth-round kayo in June '47 rematch with Zale. It was another brutal, seesaw punchout and again garnered THE RING's Fight of the Year honors ... Lost title back to Zale the following year in his first defense, getting knocked out in the third round of a relatively tame bout ... Went undefeated in his next 21 bouts to earn a crack at reigning middleweight champion Ray Robinson, in '51. Floored Robinson in the third round, but Sugar Ray jumped up and kayoed Graziano later the same round ... Retained his popularity after retiring, working as a pitchman for various products, ranging from yogurt to hair dye. Also had a reoccurring role on Martha Raye's TV show and numerous bit parts on television and in movies ... Wrote autobiography called *Somebody Up There Likes Me* (with Rowland Barber), which was made into a movie in '56 starring Paul Newman as Graziano ... One of the old champ's last gigs was as a marketing executive for the Atlantis Casino in Atlantic City, New Jersey, in the mid-1980s.

Charlie Fusari samples Graziano's famous right hand during their September 1949 bout at Yankee Stadium, which Rocky won via 10th-round TKO. It was Graziano's third straight kayo since losing the title, part of a streak that eventually led to a match with Sugar Ray Robinson.



Graziano crashes his deadly right hand into Tony Zale's head en route to a sixth-round knockout victory and the middleweight championship of the world. The first two bouts of their trilogy were among the most thrilling title fights of all-time.

A bandaged Graziano greets his supporters after returning to New York following his title-winning fight with Zale in Chicago. Although he had his problems with the New York commission, Rocky remained a fan favorite to the end of his days.



Rocky knocks out the gray with one of the many products he pitched over the years.

Graziano rocks Tony Janiro with a right during their March 1950 bout at Madison Square Garden that ended in a 10-round draw. They fought two more times, with Rocky winning a decision later the same year and then stopping Janiro in their third bout, in 1951.

[Summary]

Heavyweights

Wladimir Klitschko KO 11 Tony Thompson
(*Retains IBF Title*)
Alexander Povetkin KO 4 Taurus Sykes
James Toney KO 3 Hasim Rahman
Danny Williams W 12 John McDermott
Monte Barrett KO 1 Tye Fields
Sinan Sam D 12 Paolo Vidoz
Brian Minto KO 1 John Poore
Colin Wilson W 12 Alex Leapai
Eddie Chambers KO 6 Raphael Butler
Chris Arreola W Disq. 3 Chazz Witherspoon
Francis Zulu W 12 Thamsanqa Dube
Gonzalo Basile W 10 Claudio Fernandez
Friday Ahunanya W10 Alonzo Butler
Denis Boytsov W 10 Fernely Feliz
Michael Grant W 8 Demetrice King
Cedric Boswell KO 2 Cliff Couser
Elijah McCall KO1 Darion Moss

Cruiserweights

Tomasz Adamek KO 7 Gary Gomez
Johnathon Banks W 12 Vincenzo Rossitto
Soulan Pownceby W 12 Moroni Schwalger
Edson Antonio W 12 Aaron Soria
Rob Calloway D 12 Max Alexander
Charles Chisamba KO 11 Isaac Ekpo
Herbie Hide W 12 Nuri Seferi
Vitaliy Rusal KO 7 Laszlo Hubert
Lawrence Tauasa KO 3 Saul Farah
Goran Delic KO 10 Antonio Quiganga
Wojciech Bartnik W 10 Oleksandr Garashchenko
Frank White W 10 Ryan Henney

Light Heavyweights

Hugo Garay W 12 Yuri Barashian
(*Wins Vacant WBA Title*)
Chris Henry KO 6 Rubin Williams
Sonni Angelo W 12 Kane McKay
Montell Griffin W10 Corey Cummings
Francisco Mora W 10 Pablo Nievas
Jonny Walker D 10 Sosaia Vaka
Jim Rock KO 7 Jonjo Finnegan
Francisco Alvarez KO 3 Ernesto Zamora

Super Middleweights

Mikkel Kessler KO 12 Dimitri Sartison
(*Wins Vacant WBA Title*)
Arthur Abraham KO 4 Edison Miranda
(*Non-Title Bout*)
Rashid Matumla W 10 Karama Nyilawila
Nestor Casanova W 10 Martin Islas
Enrique Ornelas KO 2 Daryl Salmon
Henry Buchanan KO 9 Brian Norman
Julio Garcia KO 1 Jose Medina
Andre Ward KO 8 Jerson Ravelo
Maselino Masoe KO 7 Paz Viejo

Middleweights

Felix Sturm W 12 Randy Griffin
(*Retains WBA Title*)
Raul Marquez W 12 Giovanni Lorenzo
Howard Eastman W 12 Denny Dalton
Avtandil Khurtsidze W 12 Javier Mamani
Andy Lee KO 10 Willie Gibbs
John Duddy W 10 Charles Howe
Daniel Geale W 12 Geard Ajetovic
Kevin Concepcion W 10 Tyan Booth
Wayne Elcock KO 2 Darren McDermott
Oscar Veliz W 12 Nestor Battaglia
Steven Bendall W 10 Paul Smith
Charles Whittaker KO 4 Troy Lowry
Christy Martin D 8 Valeri Mahfood
Diego Gallardo KO 3 Carlos Jerez
Yory Boy Campas KO 1 Alejandro Garcia
Craig McEwan KO 3 Juan Sanchez

Junior Middleweights

Daniel Santos KO 6 Joachim Alcine
(Wins WBA Title)
Alex Bunema KO 6 Walter Matthysse
Ryan Waters W 12 Steve Heremaia
Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. W 10 Matt Vanda
Sebastien Madani W 10 Alban Mothie
Frank LoPorto W 10 Peter Mitrevski
Vanes Martirosyan W 10 Angel Hernandez
Jeff Fenech W 10 Azumah Nelson
Samuel Colomban W 10 Robert Toomey
Favio Medina W 10 Ivan Robinson
Gareth Sutherland W 10 Donovan Boucher
Hector Camacho KO 7 Perry Ballard

Welterweights

Andre Berto KO 7 Miki Rodriguez
(*Wins Vacant WBC Title*)
Motoki Sasaki W 12 Darsim Nanggala
Vyacheslav Senchenko W 12 Frederic Klose
Delvin Rodriguez KO 11 Oscar Diaz
Saul Alvarez W 10 Miguel Vazquez
Emanuel Augustus KO 2 Jakkirt Suwunnalirt

Ricardo Williams Jr. KO 1 Sebastien Hamel
Terrance Cauthen W 8 Alexis Camacho

Junior Welterweights

Kendall Holt KO 1 Ricardo Torres
Lamont Peterson KO 9 Rogelio Castaneda Jr.
David Barnes W 12 Barry Morrison
Andrei Abramenko W 10 Andrei Stoliarchuk
Dunis Linan W 10 Florencio Castellano
Vinni Skovgaard W 10 Cornelia Zimmer
Lenny Daws W 10 Mihaita Mutu
Breidis Prescott W10 Richard Abril
Don Futrell D 10 Lowell Brownfield

Lightweights

Manny Pacquiao KO 9 David Diaz
(Wins WBC Title)
Julio Diaz KO 5 David Torres
Amir Khan KO 5 Michael Gomez
Anthony Peterson W 12 Fernando Trejo
Alejandro Gomez W 10 Oscar Pereyra
Miguel Huerta W 10 Juan Cruz
Kevin Kelley W 10 Jaime Palma
Rafael Guzman W 12 Zaid Zavaleta
Dariusz Snarski W 10 Araik Sachbazjan
Andrew Murray W 10 Peter McDonagh
Billy Sumba W 10 Rocky Alap-alap

Junior Lightweights

Ali Funeka KO 4 Zahir Raheem
Yodsanan Nanthachai KO 6 Jimrex Jaca
Marlon Aguilar W 12 Antonio Meza
Vitali Tajbert W 12 Antonio Bento
Benoit Gaudet W 12 Jhohnny Antequera
William Kickett W 10 Gairy St. Clair
Francisco Lorenzo W Disq. 4 Humberto Soto
Dodie Boy Agrabio KO 1 Yokkeo Sor Poonsawat
Hylon Williams KO 1 Ruben Calderon
Maurice Chule KO 9 Musa Njue
Roberto Arrieta KO 3 Diego Mora
Jamie Arthur KO 2 Dai Davies

Featherweights

Steven Luevano D 12 Mario Santiago
Oleg Yefimovych W 12 Sergio Blanco
Nur Madura KO 12 Sonny Manakane
Roinet Caballero W 10 Yoshinori Miyata
Jose Ramirez KO 10 Ivan Garcia
Carlos Medellin W 10 Arturo Estrada
Juan Ruiz KO 6 Wayne McCullough
Yuriorkis Gamboa KO 1 Al Seeger

Junior Featherweights

Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym KO 3 Jason Butan
Jeremy Parodi W 12 Fabrizio Trotta
Matthew Marsh W 12 Esham Pickering

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Lightweight Anthony Peterson rips a right into Fernando Trejo

Ciso Morales W 12 Narongnoi Or Muangklang
Bernard Dunne W 10 Damian Marchiano
Nestor Rocha W 10 Jose Beranza
Paul Hyland W 10 Marc Callaghan
Arsen Martirosian KO 8 Marcel Kasimov
Giovanni Andrade KO 7 Jorge Paredes

Bantamweights

Malik Bouziane W 12 Jorge Perez
Abner Mares W 10 Jonathan Arias
Yonnhy Perez W 10 Oscar Andrade

Junior Bantamweights

Koki Kameda KO 2 Marino Montiel

Flyweights

Moruti Mthalane W 12 Hussein Hussein
Ryo Miyazaki W 10 Ngaoprajan Sithsaithong
Eric Dias Siregar W 10 Jun Eraham
Ratanapol Sor Vorapin KO 1 Fang Shuai
Bert Batawang Tech. Win 6 Benjie Sorolla

Junior Flyweights

Ulises Solis W 12 Glenn Donaire
(Retains IBF Title)
Carlos Tamara W 12 Juan Esquer
Muhammad Rachman W 10 Edren Dapudong

Strawweights

Oleydong Sithsamerchai KO 9 Juinichi Ebizuoka
(Retains WBC Title)
Roman Gonzalez KO 2 Abraham Irias
Heri Amol KO 8 Agus Situmorang
Nkosinathi Joyi KO 7 Sammy Gutierrez
Massimo Bertozzi W 12 Mhand Boukedim

Francisco Lorenzo W Disq. 4 Humberto Soto

Las Vegas, Nevada: Boxing has had its share of bad calls, but Lorenzo's disqualification win over Soto at the Mandalay Bay Events Center on the Manny Pacquiao-David Diaz undercard was one of the worst in recent memory.

As the fourth round was winding down, a battered Lorenzo, already down once, backed into the ropes, trying to get away from Soto's assault. Referee Joe Cortez (USA) moved in to separate the fighters, but in a moment of indecisiveness, allowed the fight to continue. Lorenzo, who had been dipping down as if he wanted to take a knee and halt the action, seemed stuck in a crouching position. As Lorenzo finally touched down, Soto threw a combination, the final blow being a left hook that barely grazed the back of his pate. Then the confusion started.

Lorenzo sat on the canvas, behaving as if he was unable to continue. Of course, as blood spurted from the cuts on his face, he certainly looked like a pathetic victim, but most observers felt he was faking it. While Lorenzo carried out his ridiculous pantomime, Cortez conferred with ringside officials, including Nevada State Athletic Commission head Keith Kizer. After what seemed an interminable summit meeting, it was announced that Soto, 28, was disqualified. The bleeding, vanquished Lorenzo, 36, was the winner.

"The punch to the back of the head is the sole reason this fight was stopped," Kizer said. HBO replays showed the punch was barely a tap.

Since WBC super featherweight titlist Manny Pacquiao has moved up to lightweight, Soto, 44-7-2 (27), and Lorenzo, 33-4 (14), were fighting for the "interim" title. Because of the bout's controversial ending, the WBC chose to not award Lorenzo the belt.

Soto, 130, Tijuana, California, by way of Los Mochis, Mexico, had dominated the bout from the outset, using his height and reach to outbox his much older opponent. Lorenzo, 130, San Cristobal, Dominican Republic, tried to disturb Soto's rhythm with awkward moves and bit of rule bending, but it was no use. In slightly less than four rounds of action, CompuBox punch stats had Soto outlanding Lorenzo 78-41. He was clearly on the verge of winning by knockout.

The DQ loss probably won't affect Soto's immediate future; he looked good prior to the odd stoppage, and would offer a strong challenge for any of the top junior lightweights, and as this issue went to press, there was also talk of him moving up to fight Manny Pacquiao at 135.

Television: **HBO Pay-Per-View**
Promoters: **Top Rank, DiBella Entertainment**
(6-28-08)

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Lorenzo sure doesn't look like the winner

Monte Barrett KO 1 Tye Fields

Las Vegas, Nevada: Barrett, 220, Queens, New York, showed that he is still one of the heavyweight division's better spoilers when he kayoed Fields, 265, Las Vegas by way of Missoula, Montana, at 0:57 of the first round. Barrett has sometimes carried a reputation for falling short in big fights, but he has also been known to score upset wins over such heavyweight prospects as Eric Kirkland, Dominick Guinn, and Owen Beck. Now we can add Fields to the list of up-and-comers whose dreams were dashed by Barrett.

Fields, 40-2 (36), a 6'8" former college basketball player, lumbered out at the opening bell throwing jabs at Barrett's head. Fields had been incredibly aggressive in his previous fight, a quick kayo win over Roderick Willis, and he intended to work the same way against Barrett. As Barrett moved backward, Fields came forward, leaning in with his oversized head exposed like the prow of a ship. Barrett saw the opening and fired a right hand that caught Fields flush and made the big man wobble. A volley of follow-up punches sent Fields to the canvas with a loud boom that echoed throughout the Mandalay Bay Events Center, and was probably heard all over the Las Vegas Strip. Fields struggled to his

feet, beating the count of referee Kenny Bayless (USA), but his glassy eyes convinced Bayless to end it.

With this win, Barrett, 34-6 (20), may have inched back into the heavyweight picture. He's one of boxing's good guys, so it's nice to see the 37-year-old get what will probably be his last chance at something resembling a decent payday.

After the bout, Barrett said, "My middle initial is 'D,' and that stands for desperate and dangerous." He also kidded with Fields' promoter, Bob Arum, telling Arum that he'd just saved him from spending a ton of money on Fields' future.

As for the 33-year-old Fields, he'd suffered a one-round knockout loss to Jeff Ford many years ago. Fields avenged that loss, and rebuilt his career by fighting often against weak opposition. The biggest name on Fields' ledger was Bruce Seldon, best known for once swooning from the breeze of a Mike Tyson left hook. Seldon swooned in front of Fields too.

Monte Barrett is not a swooner.

Television: **HBO Pay-Per-View**
Promoters: **Top Rank, DiBella Entertainment**
(6-28-08)

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Barrett flattens Fields in the first

[THE RING Fighter of the Month]

Manny Pacquiao

Maybe it isn't fair to award Manny Pacquiao the Fighter of the Month honors. After all, everybody else under consideration, like Arthur Abraham, Raul Marquez, and Kendall Holt, has to deal with the limitations of being human. Pacquiao clearly doesn't have to account for those same limitations.

If Pacquiao were human, he would have shown some signs of slowing down after fighting Marco Antonio Barrera, Erik Morales, and Juan Manuel Marquez a combined seven times, and he would have shown some ill effects of rising seven weight classes above where he turned pro 13 years ago. But if anything, Pacquiao is just continuing to get better, and though the opposition was certainly made to order, Pacquiao's victory over David Diaz in June to claim a lightweight belt may have been the most perfect performance of his storied career.

"Pac-Man" showed exquisite footwork, was nearly impossible to hit cleanly, and landed every punch in the book against Diaz. It was a clinic, plain and simple. It was a guy who's already seen and done it all in the course of 52 pro fights suggesting that maybe we haven't even seen the best of him yet.

Pacquiao can't possibly be human, can he?

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/GETTY IMAGES

Steven Luevano D 12 Mario Santiago

Las Vegas, Nevada: The Mandalay Bay Events Center was nearly empty, with most of the customers lingering outside since the main event of Pacquiao vs. Diaz wasn't due for another two hours. What those fans missed was a competitive 12-round bout between WBO featherweight titlist Luevano, 126, La Puente, California, and challenger Santiago, 125, Ponce, Puerto Rico.

The bout started heating up as early as the second round. Luevano, 35-1-1 (15), was knocked down by a quick Santiago left, only to rise and return the favor almost immediately. Santiago hit the canvas and bounced back up with a grin. From there, Santiago fought a smart fight and landed sharp punches that seemed to rattle Luevano every time they connected, especially in the fifth, when Santiago scored with a hard left to the head.

Luevano was effective during the later rounds, but Santiago, 19-1-1 (14), hurt Luevano again in the 10th. Luevano, 27, fought hard during the 11th and 12th, although both fighters were beginning to flag. The final minutes weren't pretty. Santiago, 29, occasionally looked to referee Tony Weeks (USA) to complain of Luevano's fouling, but nothing came of it.

When it was over, judge Harry Davis (Canada) scored the bout 117-111 for Luevano, Duane Ford (USA) had it 115-113 for Santiago, and Dave Moretti (USA) saw a stalemate at 114-114. The three-way split meant a draw verdict, with Luevano retaining the belt. THE RING saw it for Santiago, 115-113.

The CompuBox punch stats gave some credence to the final verdict, with the fighters landing an almost equal number of punches—215 for Luevano, 214 for Santiago. But if ringsiders were sprayed by blood and perspiration, it had to be Luevano's, because it was his head being snapped around.

Luevano believed the verdict was wrong. "He fought to control the first half of the fight. He tried to take me out early. However, I felt that I was the stronger fighter in the second half of the fight." He added, "Well, I am still the champion. I feel that my record should have a 'W' rather than a 'D.'"

"I was the stronger fighter in there," countered Santiago, who was visibly upset by the draw. "I felt that I won the fight. I can't believe that the judges took it away from me."

Television: **HBO Pay-Per-View**
Promoters: **Top Rank, DiBella Entertainment**
(6-28-08)

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Santiago delivers wicked right en route to draw with Luevano

Mikkel Kessler KO 12 Dimitri Sartison

Copenhagen, Denmark: In his first outing since experiencing the first defeat of his career at the hands of world super middleweight champion Joe Calzaghe and having had subsequent surgery on his right hand, Kessler, 167¾, Monaco, via Copenhagen, Denmark, secured a late stoppage win over Sartison, 167¼, Hamburg, Germany, via Rudny, Kazakhstan, after dominating the bout behind his left jab and sharp combination punching. Victory also secured for him the WBA super middleweight title vacated by Australia's Anthony Mundine, though Calzaghe remains the WBA "super" champion at 168 pounds, for what it is worth.

Kessler had been heavily criticized for not meeting Edison Miranda in a proposed bout, but, as far as he was concerned, a Miranda meeting was not on his agenda. "He had a lot to say, but I have not heard from him since he was knocked out by Arthur Abraham, which is no surprise," Kessler said. However flawed Miranda might have been, Sartison was a nondescript opponent. He had stopped Argentina's Pablo Nievas in eight rounds in February, a fighter who had gone 12 rounds with Mundine in June 2007, but his undefeated record had been accumulated against a succession of anonymous foes.

Surprisingly, he did rock Kessler with a right hand to the jaw in the opening round at Brondby Hallen. The 29-year-old Dane may have been slightly off-balance, but his knees dipped for a moment. He was flustered, but quickly got his jab working, and for the remainder of the fight this was an overwhelming weapon. Sartison's awkward movement meant that Kessler was unable to completely suppress him, but Kessler did control the exchanges.

Briefly, Sartison, 28, rallied in the seventh round, landing with some looping hooks, though no real damage

PHOTO BY KELD NAVNTOFT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Kessler eases back into action with kayo of Sartison

was done. Kessler, 40-1 (30), got back into his stride and, heading into the final round, Sartison was showing signs of tiring. This become even more apparent as the round wore on, and Kessler moved in for the finish, hurting Sartison, 22-1 (14), with a series of powerful hooks and crosses and sending him to the canvas. South African referee Stanley Christodoulou did not even pick up a count before he waved the bout over.

"I would like to have a rematch with Joe Calzaghe, but if he will not fight again after the Roy Jones fight, I would love to fight Kelly Pavlik," said Kessler. "I have already told [promoter] Mogens Palle to try to secure this fight for me. Pavlik impresses me with his style against people who get pushed back or don't fight back, but he's never faced an A-level challenge like the one that I would present to him."

Promoter: **Mogens & Bettina Palle**

(6-21-08)

Brian Doogan

Arthur Abraham KO 4 Edison Miranda

Hollywood, Florida: Abraham was once known as "Smurf's boxer," a reference to the 1980s children's cartoon about tiny blue people that is still popular in Germany. Abraham had to ditch the gimmick a couple of years ago after being threatened with legal action under copyright laws. The studio might have done him a favor.

In his first pro fight outside of Europe, Abraham proved he deserves to be taken seriously among the middleweights and not viewed as some gimmicky cartoon character. The Germany-based Armenian floored the trash-talking Miranda three times in the fourth round before referee Telis Assimenios (USA) halted their much-anticipated rematch at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, held at a catchweight of 166 pounds.

The two fought for Abraham's IBF middleweight belt in September 2006, with Abraham winning a controversial decision in Germany despite having his jaw broken in two places. This time, Abraham, 27-0 (22), entered with a more conservative game plan. He allowed Miranda, 30-3 (26), to push the pace and take two of the first three rounds. Miranda, 166, landed some decent bodyshots, but most of his punches bounced off the high guard of Abraham, 166.

The Colombian slugger also crashed an uppercut well below the beltline late in the second round, forcing a brief timeout to allow Abraham to recover, and in the third drew a warning from Assimenios for holding and hitting. Miranda lost five points due to fouls in the first fight, but this time Abraham didn't allow Miranda's dirty tactics to become a factor.

After Miranda, 27, was warned in the third, Abraham, 28, came back with a hard right to the jaw that buckled his opponent's knees. A tiring Miranda didn't adjust his pace at the start of the fourth, and Abraham capitalized by finding an opening for a big left hook to the head, which he punctuated with a right cross that sent Miranda down a minute into the round.

Miranda got up on rubbery legs, and Abraham quickly dropped him again with a left hook to the chin. "Pantera" beat the count, but was promptly sent down for a third time by another left hook, convincing Assimenios to wave off the bout 73 seconds into the round.

The electrifying knockout of Miranda sets the stage for a possible showdown with world champion Kelly Pavlik in early-2009. First, Abraham is expected to make a mandatory defense of his belt against 38-year-old Raul Marquez this fall.

After the bout, Seminole tribal police arrested Alexander Abraham, Arthur's younger brother and an unbeaten junior middleweight, after Alexander rushed into the ring and allegedly kicked Miranda and ringside doctor Donald Weiss while Weiss was attending to Miranda. Alexander, who denied the attack, was freed the following morning after posting $100 bail and returned to Germany with the rest of the Abraham team. He faces a possible fine of up to $100,000 from the Florida State Athletic Commission.

Television: **Showtime**

Promoters: **Sauerland Events, Warriors Boxing**

(6-21-08)

Raul Marquez W 12 Giovanni Lorenzo

Hollywood, Florida: High on the list of annoying postgame statements is the "no one gave us a chance"

line. It wouldn't be such a ridiculous comment if it were really the case. It rarely is.

But the 36-year-old Marquez could have gotten away with it after outpointing the younger, previously unbeaten Lorenzo in a fight almost no one thought the shopworn vet could pull off. Marquez hadn't lost since being ripped by Jermain Taylor in 2004, but in his last fight, Marquez barely squeaked out a draw against the aging Bronco McKart. In a prefight media survey, 29 of 33 respondents picked Lorenzo.

But Marquez, who stepped away from broadcasting to launch a comeback two years ago, fought like the early-20s version of himself in earning a mandatory shot at IBF beltholder Arthur Abraham. He was the aggressor throughout, and even a nasty cut above his right eye in the 10th couldn't stop him from exposing the 27-year-old Lorenzo.

Marquez, 41-3-1 (29), was tenacious from the opening bell as he pressured his way inside against his taller opponent at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino. Lorenzo, 26-1 (18), a New York-based Dominican and a 2000 Olympian, started finding a home for his counter right hands in the second as Marquez opened up to throw his powershots.

But Lorenzo, 160, had never gone past eight rounds, and none of the opponents Main Events had used to build him matched the resume of the southpaw Marquez, 160. It started to show by the fifth, as a marked-up Marquez was jabbing his way inside and winning rounds with his work rate and aggression.

A tiring Lorenzo didn't seem to know how to respond. He also struggled to tie up Marquez in clinches, which Marquez usually took advantage of by pounding Lorenzo's midsection until ref Jorge Alonso (USA) separated the two.

Lorenzo caught a second wind late and was enjoying his best round of the fight in the 10th when he opened the cut over Marquez right eye. But he canceled out his success near the end of the round by grabbing Marquez along the ropes and intentionally butting him on the wound, resulting in a point deduction from Alonso. It wound up costing Lorenzo the fight.

All three Florida judges—Michael Pernick, Mike Ross, and Peter Trematerra—scored it 114-113 for Marquez. Most observers had the margin a bit wider, including THE RING, which scored it 115-112. Marquez, who improved to 6-0-1 since launching his comeback in April '06, is expected to meet Abraham in October or November.

Television: **Showtime**
Promoters: **Sauerland Events, Warriors Boxing**
(6-21-08)

Kendall Holt KO 1 Ricardo Torres

Las Vegas, Nevada: Comebacks, controversy, and unconsciousness—all in 61 seconds. In the rematch to their heated alphabet belt title tilt of 10 months earlier, Holt and Torres crammed an extraordinary amount of action and drama into a brief battle, with Torres dropping Holt twice before Holt—aided by an accidental clash of heads—scored a sensational come-from-behind knockout to claim the WBO junior welterweight strap before a crowd of 3,226 at Planet Hollywood Casino.

In their first bout, on September 1, 2007, in Barranquilla, Colombia, Torres' 11th-round stoppage of Holt was marred by his local fans littering the ring repeatedly during the fight (Holt even claimed to be hit with a beer can in round six) and the referee ultimately calling a quick-trigger halt. A rematch was a natural, and though the WBO refused to order it, the fighters came to the conclusion that it was the best possible payday for both and Torres agreed to make his third defense against the versatile Paterson, New Jersey, fighter.

Just 13 seconds into the fight, the heavy-handed Torres, 139, Cartagena, Colombia, was looking pretty smart for accepting the challenge when he dropped Holt with a right hand over his guard. The 27-year-old Holt, 139, bounced up immediately and began trading heavy shots with Torres, but the 28-year-old titlist got the better of it, landing a right and a left that caused Holt to pitch forward and touch his right glove to the canvas. Before referee Jay Nady (USA) could step in, however, Holt stood up and Torres landed another left. Holt complained, but Torres could hardly be faulted for throwing a shot with Holt standing erect in front of him, and Nady let the foul go and gave "Rated R" an eight-count.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Ref Nady pulls Holt away from Torres

When the action resumed, so did the reckless slugging, and Torres followed Holt to the ropes and left himself open. Holt landed a nice left to the body, and then the fighters' heads came together, sending the Colombian staggering diagonally across the ring. It happened so quickly and in the midst of such fiery action that nobody in the arena, including Nady, knew about the head clash until instant replay revealed it after the fight. To the naked eye, it appeared a right hand had backed Torres into the ropes. And just a moment later, an actual right hand finished the job. With Torres vulnerable along the strands, Holt blasted him with a right to the jaw, and Torres sunk to a knee, partially tangled in the ropes, completely frozen while Nady counted him out at the 61-second mark.

"I caught the guy perfect and was pretty sure that would end it," Holt, 24-2 (13), said of the finishing punch. "This is better than a dream come true. I know I beat him the first time, and now everyone saw what happened tonight."

"I had him. He was in my hands. But I got careless and he got me," reflected Torres, 32-2 (28), after coming to. "There was some sort of headbutt and it took me off-balance. I was off-balance and I never saw the last punch."

Because replays made it clear that the clash of heads was such a significant factor in Torres' demise, and because the fight was so sensational, there was immediate talk of a rubber match. Hopefully, a third fight will be just as entertaining and, for a change, controversy-free.

Television: **Showtime**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(7-5-08)
Eric Raskin

Hozumi Hasegawa KO 2 Cristian Faccio

Tokyo, Japan: Japanese southpaw Hasegawa, 117½, successfully retained the WBC bantamweight title for the sixth time as he impressively dropped Uruguayan challenger Faccio, 117¾, twice to prompt American referee Toby Gibson's well-timed intervention at 2:18 of the second session in the main event of a title twinbill also featuring Edwin Valero vs. Takehiro Shimada.

It was a short but entertaining fight. From the outset, Hasegawa showed his improvement in balance and relaxation as he smoothly threw accurate combinations at the nervous challenger. Hasegawa's three-punch combination (right jab-straight left-right hook) shook up Faccio.

In the second round, Hasegawa, 27, landed an eye-catching left-hand counter that dropped the 25-year-old Faccio with a thud. It was a beautifully timed punch, and it appeared that the end was coming, though the Uruguayan gamely regained his feet and resumed fighting.

Immediately, Hasegawa went forward and threw fast and strong combinations at the still dizzy challenger. He accurately connected with a straight left followed by a right hook, then landed a solid left. Faccio fell awkwardly to the canvas on his side, and Gibson promptly called a stoppage without bothering to count.

PHOTO BY TORU YAMANAKA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Faccio (right) was no match for improved Hasegawa

Faccio, 15-3 (10), looked more stunned than hurt by Hasegawa's kamikaze attack. The crestfallen loser only said, "I wanted to show more."

Jubilant victor Hasegawa, 24-3 (8), said, "I'm happy if the crowd was entertained by my showing. I'm glad to win by a good stoppage." Hasegawa also expressed eagerness to fight in the U.S., though the list of noteworthy American bantamweights isn't a long one.

Promoter: **Teiken Promotions**
(6-12-08)
Joe Koizumi

Edwin Valero KO 7 Takehiro Shimada

Tokyo, Japan: WBA super featherweight titlist Valero, 24-0 (24), kept his belt and extended his knockout streak by demolishing Japanese challenger Shimada, 22-4-1 (15), at 1:55 of the seventh round. Valero, 129¾, swept every round with his aggression against the defensive challenger, and in the seventh, he finally caught Shimada, 129¾, and floored him with a southpaw right hook following a strong left to the face. Referee Guillermo Perez Pineda (Panama) called a well-received halt to the onslaught after Shimada beat the count on rubbery legs.

With the southpaw Valero throwing right-left combinations all the way, Shimada displayed his defensive skills to almost nullify his attack in the first three rounds. But Shimada, 10 years Valero's senior at 36, was intent purely on averting Valero's continual aggression and forgot to offer attacks of his own.

Valero said afterward, "Shimada's defense was so good that I thought after the third about a possibility that this fight might go the distance." The Japan-based Venezuelan, however, found the openings in the fourth, when he landed

a strong straight left to the solar plexus. The Japanese counterpuncher visibly slowed down after that.

No matter how many punches he missed, Valero kept throwing and forced Shimada to the ropes in the fifth, when he opened a gash on the challenger's left eyebrow. The seventh witnessed Valero swarm over the suddenly fading Shimada with a flurry of punches. Forcing him to the ropes, the lefty titlist caught him with a vicious right hook, and Shimada grabbed the top rope to stay up. Then, another right hook exploded and down went Shimada. The ref counted a mandatory eight and then declared a halt.

The official tallies after the sixth were as follows: Tom Miller (USA) 60-54 (the same as THE RING), Derek Milham (Australia) 59-56, and Raul Caiz Jr. (USA) 58-56, all for Valero.

New trainer Kenny Adams has clearly improved Valero's right hand, especially when he throws it following his straight left. Just how much it has improved will be put to the test if Valero moves up to the 135-pound class and faces pound-for-pound king Manny Pacquiao, as has been discussed.

Promoter: **Teiken Promotions**
(6-12-08)
Joe Koizumi

Felix Sturm W 12 Randy Griffin

Halle, Germany: With Germany-based Arthur Abraham making an emphatic statement in a fourth-round knockout of big-talking Edison Miranda in his first appearance in America, it was necessary for Sturm, 159¼, Hamburg, Germany, to follow up with a business-like victory of his own. There were none of the fireworks that Abraham produced in Florida, but Sturm did a solid job and outpointed Griffin, 156¾, Louisville, Kentucky, at Gerry Weber Stadium to retain the WBA middleweight title for the fourth time in his second title tenure.

Griffin had surprised Sturm, 30-2-1 (13), in their first encounter, in October 2007, when he put up a spirited effort in a close, exciting fight that ended in a draw. Sturm had boxed well behind his left jab, but Griffin, 24-2-3 (12), was game throughout and the blistering exchanges that he initiated made the bout competitive. For the rematch, Sturm had gone to school and he managed to utilize his superior boxing skills to put the issue beyond doubt.

Griffin, 32, tried to press the action again by throwing strong combinations and sustaining his aggression throughout, but he found it difficult to penetrate the German's guard. The jab was the key to Sturm's victory and he used it to build an early lead, moving in behind it with fast combination punches. Griffin managed to break through with combinations of his own in round three, but Sturm, 29, was too elusive to be pinned and made into the kind of stationary target that the American would have desired.

By the middle rounds, Griffin was behind, and Sturm finished strongly, landing several big hooks and crosses in the penultimate round and achieving at least parity in the final-round exchanges. Levi Martinez (USA) scored it 116-112, Mikael Hook (Sweden) 116-113, and Daniel Talon (France) 118-110, all for Sturm. THE RING saw it 116-112 for Sturm. The referee was Guillermo Perez Pineda (Panama).

"The rematch was personally very important to me," said Sturm. "Randy is a great boxer with a giant heart. That was my best fight. I'm very happy to have won and I have had no thoughts about fighting him again."

He would like to meet IBF titleholder Abraham instead. Abraham, however, appears headed in a different direction for now, with a mandatory against Raul Marquez planned and a meeting with Kelly Pavlik possibly following.

Promoter: **Universum-Box**
(7-5-08)
Brian Doogan

PHOTO BY PATRIK STOLLARZ/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Sturm's left jab carried him to a comprehensive decision in Griffin rematch

Raul Garcia W 12 Florante Condes

La Paz, Mexico: Filipino fight fans were hoping that Condes, nicknamed "Little Pacquiao," was going to be their next big star, but in his first defense of the IBF mini flyweight title, more than 11 months after he won it from

Muhammad Rachman, Condes was dethroned by slick Mexican Garcia via split decision at Estadio Arturo C. Nahl. The titlist scored a knockdown in round 12, but it wasn't enough to pull out a fight in which he was generally outboxed for the first 11 rounds.

Ring rust was almost certainly a factor for Condes, 103½, especially against a clever boxer such as the unbeaten Garcia, 103½. In this battle of southpaws, local favorite "Rayito" piled up the points in the early rounds by boxing safely. Condes, 28, frequently backed up to the ropes and invited Garcia in, hoping he could shame the challenger into being more macho and leaving an opening for a counter from the big-punching Little Pacquiao, but for the most part, the Mexican resisted. The tactic did work in round seven, however, when Condes landed a series of hard shots and stunned Garcia.

PHOTO BY RONALDO SCHEMIDT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Sosa defends for fifth time in 11 months by kayoing Kunishige

Garcia, 23-0-1 (15), got back to work, however, and had a safe lead amassed heading into the 12th. But the determined Condes stormed out and blasted him with a sizzling right hand, sending Garcia to the canvas for a brief count from referee Wayne Hedgepeth (USA). When the challenger rose, he willingly traded with Condes, 22-4-1 (20), until the final bell, wanting to put a positive stamp on his victory, even if it meant risking turning it into a defeat. The fighters embraced at the bell and awaited the judges' scores.

American judge Adalaide Byrd's score was a ridiculous 118-110 for Garcia, giving the local fighter every round but the final one. Alejandro Lopez (Mexico) was more in line with reality, carding 115-112 for Garcia. And judge Abraham Pacheco (USA) somehow saw it 115-112 for Condes, leading to a split verdict in a fight that shouldn't have been that difficult to reach a consensus on. (For what it's worth, though, fans at the arena left believing there was a consensus, as Pacheco's score was mistakenly read by the ring announcer as being in favor of Garcia.)

(6-14-08)

Edgar Sosa KO 8 Takashi Kunishige

Mexico City, Mexico: WBC light flyweight titlist Sosa isn't boxing's most popular beltholder and he isn't boxing's best either, but he's definitely the busiest alphabet king in the game. Making his fifth defense in the last 11 months, Sosa, 108, Mexico City, dominated under-qualified challenger Kunishige, 107¼, Osaka, Japan, working his way toward a stoppage victory at 1:39 of round eight.

Kunishige, a 32-year-old southpaw with only two knockout victories in 21 prior fights, wasn't expected to threaten the sturdy and determined Sosa, and indeed he didn't. Fighting in front of his hometown fans at the Palacio de los Deportes, Sosa used a two-fisted attack to win every round, the one-sided nature of the contest increasing with each passing round. Finally, midway through the eighth, referee Hector Afu (Panama) had seen enough and called a halt.

Busy as he's been since defeating Brian Viloria for the vacant belt in 2007, Sosa, 32-5 (17), hasn't done much in the way of taking on serious opposition, with a faded Roberto Leyva qualifying as his most accomplished challenger. Kunishige, 18-3-1 (2), certainly did nothing to reverse the soft-touch trend. It's time for a meaningful fight, and the obvious one would be an alphabet unification against Ulises Solis, who owns a pair of close decision wins over Sosa, posted five and seven years ago.

But in the meantime, a busy schedule against weak opposition is better than not fighting at all.

Promoter: **Promociones Zanfer**

(6-14-08)

Amir Khan KO 5 Michael Gomez

Birmingham, England: For the third time in 18 bouts, Khan, 134½, Bolton, England, made a short trip to

PHOTO BY ANDREW YATES/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Khan came off the floor to stop Gomez in exciting slugfest

the canvas, but he climbed back up in a bloody, brutal encounter at the National Indoor Arena in Birmingham and stopped former British super featherweight titleholder Gomez, 134¾, Manchester, England, via Longford, Ireland, in the fifth round to retain the Commonwealth lightweight title. It was exciting even if it was a one-sided slugfest for the most part, but defensively, Khan continues to show room for improvement.

With this in mind, he and his handlers embarked upon a trip to America days later to sound out a number of trainers. Significantly, Freddie Roach, the trainer of lightweight titlist Manny Pacquiao, was expected to make the journey across to Bolton to work with Khan in his hometown gym, and hooking up with Roach on a more permanent basis is an option that Khan may choose to explore. "Amir seems like a very athletic guy with a very good work ethic, and he will pick up on head movement, feinting, and setting things up better," said Roach. "He will have to, if he's going to make it to the top of his weight class."

Gomez was part of a group of Manchester-based fighters, including Ricky Hatton, Michael Brodie, and Anthony Farnell, who came to the forefront of British boxing at the start of the decade before a reckless lifestyle sapped his stamina. Five years ago, he retained enough of his one-time potent punching power to stop another prospect, Alex Arthur, in a pulsating encounter, but he turned his back on Peter McDonagh and quit in the fifth round two years ago at the National Stadium in Dublin to betray his psychological frailty.

But he was all psyched up for Khan, coming out of his corner aggressively before being nailed by a right uppercut. A combination of powerful punches had softened him up before another hard flurry of hooks and uppercuts knocked Gomez to the floor. British referee John Keane counted to three before the Mancunian took the remainder of the mandatory eight-count on his feet. He remained on his feet at the bell, despite taking further punishment.

At the start of the second round, Gomez briefly threatened to upset the odds when he caught Khan with a left hook to the jaw that floored the 21-year-old 2004 Olympic silver medalist. Khan was up quickly and managed to weather the storm and put Gomez in trouble with more hard and accurate punching. Gomez, 35-9 (24), was also cut above his left eye, but he kept moving forward, trying to ignore Khan's punches. It was an immense effort on the part of the 31-year-old birthday boy. He even managed to hurt Khan again in the fourth round with a hard shot to the body, but after giving ground and regrouping, Khan, 18-0 (14), retaliated ferociously and rocked Gomez to his boots. Keane considered stepping in, but the brave challenger made it into the fifth round before a pinpoint left hook to the body knocked him down for the second time. He beat the count, but Khan hit him at will when he got back up, forcing the referee, finally, to intervene at the 2:32 mark.

"He needs more schooling and we're not going to rush him," said promoter Frank Warren.

Khan's own assessment was candid. "I was fighting with my heart and I should have used my head," he said. Learning to protect his head will be imperative if he is to reach the top of the lightweight division.

Promoter: **Sports Network**
(6-21-2008)
Brian Doogan

Andre Berto KO 7 Miguel Rodriguez

Memphis, Tennessee: The fact that the unaccomplished Rodriguez, a 29-year-old officer in the Mexico City police department, who is promoted by Don King, was deemed worthy by the WBC to fight for a belt in such a deep division is yet another example of the incompetence of the alphabet organizations.

But you can't blame any of that on Berto, who took care of business at the FedEx Forum in picking up the welterweight trinket vacated by the retiring Floyd Mayweather. Berto, 22-0 (19), steadily pummeled Rodriguez, 29-3 (23), with combination after combination. He dropped his gutsy opponent twice in the seventh, with

referee Laurence Cole (USA) jumping in to stop it 47 seconds before the bell as Berto worked for a third knockdown.

"Miki Rodriguez is a great opponent, a hard puncher and a tough opponent," the 24-year-old Berto told the Associated Press. "From start to finish, it was a tough fight, but I finally caught him in the end with my quickness."

Berto, 146, started patiently, opting to control the opening round with a quick jab that looked Roy Jones-like against the slow-fisted Rodriguez, 145. Berto began firing off the combos in the second, though he was forced backward after absorbing a couple of hard rights from his taller opponent.

Though in over his head, Rodriguez matched Berto's pace, but was gradually overwhelmed by the younger man's hand speed and fluid skills. His only chance seemed to be catching Berto with a well-timed counter, and he did land some decent right-hand shots throughout. But by the sixth, when Berto was landing hooks at will, Rodriguez' power appeared to be zapped.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Referee Cole rescues Rodriguez in the seventh

The Winter Haven, Florida, native, who fought for Haiti in the 2004 Olympics, finally floored Rodriguez with a highlight-reel knockdown midway through the seventh. Berto landed a left hook to the head, stepped back, then fired a perfect right uppercut to the chin that sent Rodriguez down. Rodriguez tried to tie up Berto after managing to beat Cole's count, but Berto dropped him again with a three-punch combo upstairs.

Rodriguez rose again, and Cole allowed him to continue long enough for a swarming Berto to land five more shots before Cole finally waved it off. According to CompuBox, Berto landed 163 of 312 punches (52 percent), including a ridiculous 63 percent of his powershots. Rodriguez was 79 of 320 overall (25 percent).

It was a solid performance from Berto, who has graduated to top-10 status and needs to be tested against some of the bigger fish in the welterweight pond. "I'm on top of the world," he said. "This is the greatest feeling in the world. I can't wait to go out and celebrate and get ready for my next group of fights."

Television: **HBO**
Promoter: **DiBella Entertainment**
(6-21-08)

Oleydong Sithsamerchai KO 9
Junichi Ebisuoka

Phuket, Thailand: Making his first defense of the WBC strawweight title he won from Eagle Kyowa in November '07, Oleydong got a set-up against Japanese clubfighter Ebisuoka, who'd won only 17 of his 30 fights coming in, and the Thai beat him with destructive ease in a temporary ring erected in Tapanhin District in Oleydong's native land.

Oleydong, 105, is a highly skilled counterpuncher, and he absolutely picked apart Ebisuoka, 105, with those counters over the first six rounds. Sensing his man weakening, the 22-year-old beltholder became the aggressor in the seventh, and he focused on the body to wear down the 27-year-old Ebisuoka. In round nine, Oleydong unleashed a vicious series of roughly 10 punches in a row to the body, and Ebisuoka, 17-11-3 (7), collapsed for the full 10-count of referee Malcolm Bulner (Australia).

Oleydong, 27-0 (11), had been so dominant, that one of the judges scored one 10-8 round even though there were no knockdowns, and another judge scored *two* 10-8 rounds. With this "gimme" defense out of the way, hopefully Oleydong will get down to more serious business the next time out.

(6-18-08) ■

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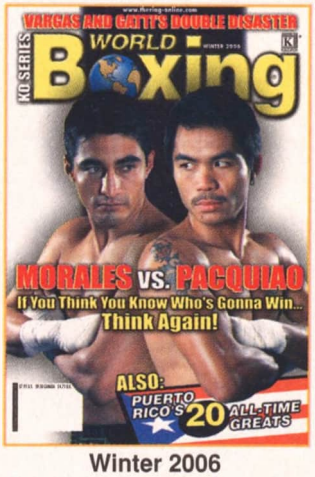

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[New Faces]

(Continued from Page 26)

Latimore wanted to prove the skeptics wrong. He wanted to prove he merits being considered a "full-time fighter."

"It was a little deceiving to look at Latimore's career on paper and see what kind of skills he had in person," said Joe Tessitore, who called the fight for ESPN2. "Deandre is a guy who got himself out of the Midwest circuit and trained in Vegas for a little over a year. He took the fight to Powell and wasn't at all intimidated by Powell or his credentials. He just went out there and made the fight. He made sure his will wasn't broken. Latimore is going to be a tough out for people. He didn't go into that fight with the mentality of an opponent."

Latimore couldn't. The way he viewed the Powell fight, he was fighting for his life—*literally*.

He owed money. He has four young daughters, ages two to five, to support. He was working menial-labor jobs, working in a scrap metal yard, cleaning carpets, doing stints at Taco Bell, McDonald's, and Burger King. As a teenager, he worked at all three fast-food restaurants in downtown St. Louis—at one time.

He'd toil 6 a.m. to 12 p.m. at McDonald's, then make it over to Taco Bell by 1 p.m. and work there until 5 p.m., then finish the day at Burger King from 5:30 p.m. to midnight. He did it five days a week for a few years, while still finding the time to train on the weekends. He'd go from restaurant to restaurant on the bus, sometimes standing there with his hand balled up in a fist, angrily tapping his leg, frustrated over his plight.

It is that kind of perseverance that still drives Latimore today.

"I was still an amateur then, and I have no idea how I found the time to train or work out. I have no idea how I did anything," said Latimore, who can laugh about those times now. "But when you're trying to survive, you have to do what you have to do. I hated getting up and being gone all day. I was making money, but I had no time to do anything. My whole day was just working. I wasn't about to pick up a gun or

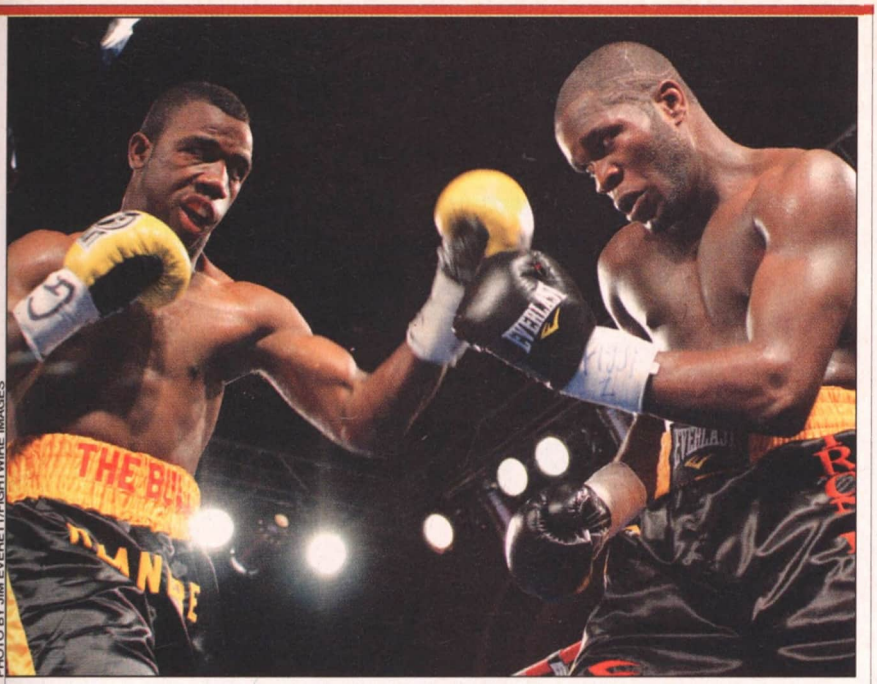

PHOTO BY JIM EVERETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Latimore showed no fear of Sechew Powell and took the fight to the favored New Yorker from the start, eventually pounding out a seventh-round TKO victory. Fortunately for Latimore, the upset was on ESPN2's* Wednesday Night Fights, *which should help further his career.

hit the streets and do anything stupid like that. I know too many people who went that route. Some of them are dead, some in jail. But that's a time in my life that I'll never forget."

Just like he can't forget the Peabody Projects, where he was raised. It's why he wore a "P" on his cap when he entered the ring against Powell. The Peabody is a wild west, a shooting gallery where you couldn't walk across a street without fighting someone or being shot at, according to Latimore. Over the last two years, three people very close to him were killed.

In 2006 alone, he had his home broken into two days before Christmas, had his car vandalized and broken into, and was robbed at gunpoint at a gas station, looking down the barrel of 22-caliber pistol.

"I had these cats run up on me while I was filling up an air tank," Latimore recalled. "I thought about grabbing the gun, but it wasn't worth it. That year, 2006, was the worst year of my life. Six people I knew were killed. That was enough for me and St. Louis."

In February '07, Latimore moved to Vegas. In August '07, his wife and daughters joined him.

In 2008, he signed a managerial deal with Jerry Giuliano, 59, the CEO of several electronic companies who also co-manages cruiserweight B.J. Flores. Giuliano didn't waste any time finding out what he had in Latimore, signing to fight Powell, who was 23-1 (14) going in and looking for an alphabet mandatory.

"All of a sudden the Powell opportunity opened, and I pushed hard for it, Giuliano said. "Everyone thought we didn't have a chance, but we were pretty confident Deandre would win. He did. That was the first time Sechew was stopped. We were thinking of going to Don King and talking up a Cory Spinks-Latimore fight, two guys from opposite ends of St. Louis. But King never contacted us."

Even so, Latimore has put down the spatula. He doesn't have to ask family and relatives for money anymore. Bills aren't backed up. He doesn't worry about his car being towed or repossessed.

"The whole experience made me stronger, even though I never want to be in that position again," Latimore said. "I hated asking my family for money, but when it comes to feeding your family, you'll do anything. Beating Powell was a big victory in a lot of ways. *I needed that.* I was fighting to keep a roof over my head, to keep my kids and my wife happy. *I had to win* that fight." ■

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WBC/IBF/WBO Lightweight Title

Nate Campbell

Main Event 12 Rounds

Joan Guzman

PHOTOS BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

The spate of top-notch lightweight bouts continues on September 13 when WBC, IBF, WBO titleholder Nate Campbell makes his first defense against Joan Guzman, who is moving up from the junior lightweight division.

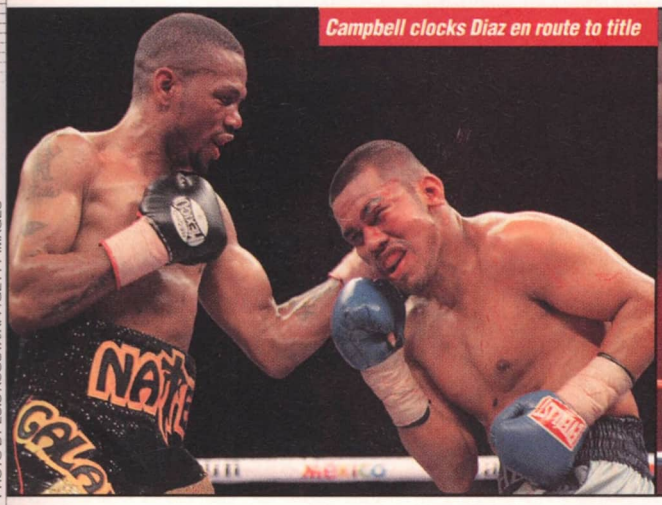
Campbell has been making a lot of noise since beating Juan Diaz for the alphabet belts, claiming it is he, not world champion Joel Casamayor, who is the best 135-pounder. If he can turn back Guzman's challenge, "The Galaxxy Warrior" will have more ammunition to support his claim. It will not, however, be easy. The undefeated Guzman is exceptionally quick, a clever boxer, and very difficult to hit cleanly.

The bout, televised by Showtime, should answer a lot of questions about both competitors and provide fans with a fast-paced bout between world-class fighters. Moreover, it will create an attractive challenger for the winner of the Casamayor-Juan Manuel Marquez championship bout, scheduled to take place the same night on HBO.

Nate Campbell

Joan Guzman

Record and World Rating



Campbell clocks Diaz en route to title

PHOTO BY LUIS ACOSTA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

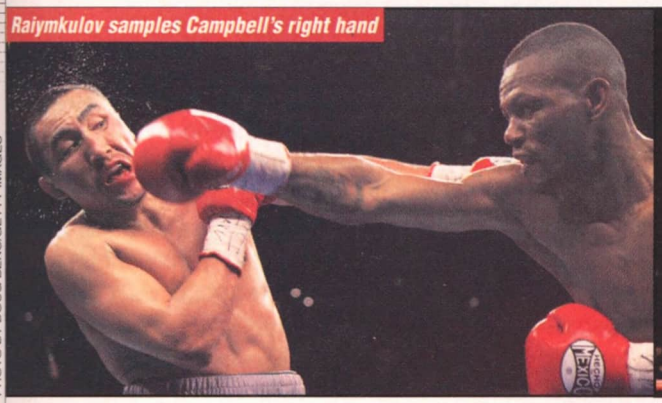
Guzman sends Soto's sweat flying

PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Is 32-5-1 with 25 knockouts ... Tallied a 30-6 record during a three-year amateur career ... Quit his job at a Winn-Dixie warehouse at the urging of a co-worker, and turned pro in February 2000 ... Went undefeated in first 23 pro bouts ... Lost bid for the vacant IBF 130-pound title in February '05 ... Won IBF, WBC, and WBO lightweight belts in March '08 ... Ranked first at lightweight by THE RING.

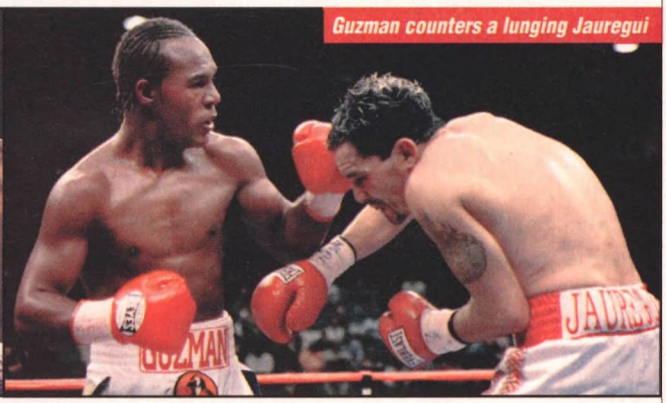
Is 28-0 with 17 knockouts ... Stellar 310-10 amateur career included a birth on the Dominican Republic's 1996 Olympic boxing team, but he failed to reach the medal rounds ... Turned pro in September 1997 ... Won vacant WBO super bantam belt in August 2002 and made two successful defenses ... Annexed WBO super feather title in May '05 and made two successful defenses ... Ranked second at junior lightweight by THE RING.

Age and Physical Equipment



Raiymkulov samples Campbell's right hand

PHOTO BY DOUG BENC/GETTY IMAGES



Guzman counters a lunging Jauregui

PHOTO BY DONALD MIRALLE/GETTY IMAGES

Is 36 years old ... Stands 5'7" with a 72-inch reach ... Weight has ranged from as high as 138 pounds to as low as 129½, but has settled at around 135 ... Hard puncher capable of turning a fight around with one or two shots ... Slightly above average hand and foot speed ... Chin generally solid, despite two kayo defeats ... Better conditioned now than in the past.

Is 32 years old ... Stands 5'7" with a 67-inch reach ... Has risen in weight from low of 121 to high of 132½ ... Campbell bout his first as full-fledged lightweight ... Outstanding hand speed ... Plenty of spring in his legs ... Punch, generated by speed rather than power, is good but nothing special ... Always in top condition and has no problem going 12 rounds at a brisk pace.

Nate Campbell

Joan Guzman

Best Weapons

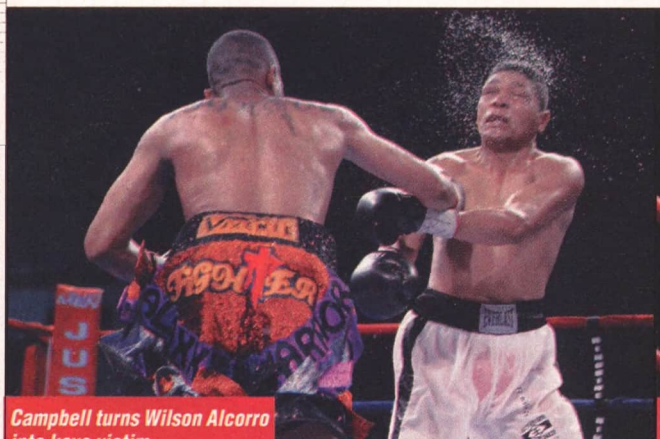


PHOTO BY SCOTT FOSTER/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Campbell turns Wilson Alcorro into kayo victim

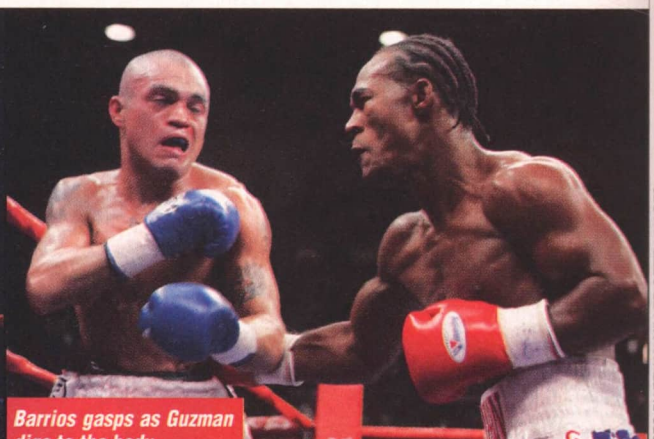


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Barrios gasps as Guzman digs to the body

Able to generate punching power with both hands, especially dynamite right ... Puts shots together well on the inside, including bodyblows and uppercuts ... Tenacious attitude and self-belief compliment a well-rounded set of boxing skills.

Super hand speed and rapid-fire combinations highlight offense ... Excellent counterpuncher, especially with lead right over opponent's jab ... Punches sharply, but not a huge hitter ... Has not stopped a foe since 2004 ... Supremely confident.

Previous Fight

Finally hit the big time by winning a 12-round split decision over Juan Diaz on March 8, 2008, to capture a trio of alphabet belts ... Went into the trenches with "The Baby Bull" and beat him at his own game ... Stayed right with the hard-charging Diaz the first half of the fight and pulled ahead the second half to win by scores of 116-111, 115-112, and an absurd 113-114.

Won a unanimous 12-round decision over highly regarded junior lightweight contender Humberto Soto on November 17, 2007, by tallies of 118-110 and 117-111 (twice) ... Way too quick for the competent but plodding and predictable Mexican ... Controlled most rounds with elusive defensive skills ... Showboated down the stretch instead of staging strong finish.

Quality of Opposition

Despite erratic form, has recorded wins over decent opposition at both 130 and 135 pounds, including: Almazbek "Kid Diamond" Raiymkulov (KO 10), Daniel Attah (W 12), Daniel Alicea (KO 3), Carlos Navarro (KO 5), Ricky Quiles (W 12), and Matt Zega (W 12) ... Slick boxers such as Joel Casamayor (L 10) and Isaac Hlatswayo (L 12) proved troublesome, as did Australian brawler Robbie Peden (KO by 5, KO by 8).

List of victims include dangerous sluggers such as Jorge Barrios (W 12), Terdsak Jandaeng (W 12), Agapito Sanchez (KO 7), and Hector Julio Avila (KO 2), grind-'em-down pressure fighters such as Javier Jaurequi (W 10), and gutty fringe contenders such a Antionio Davis (W 12) and Fernando Beltran (W 12) ... Most of his early pro fights in the Dominican Republic were against obscure opposition.

Defense

Has the ability and reach to box well from long range, but is more at home taking fight to his adversaries than being cautious ... Blocks and rolls with punches well on the inside ... 36-year-old legs still capable of motoring away from danger ... Mental lapses, such as when he stuck his chin out for Peden and was kayoed, remain problematic.

Marvelous upper-body movement and agility ... Speedy footwork makes him a very difficult target ... Work with trainer Floyd Mayweather Sr. has added the shoulder roll to his defensive bag of tricks ... Experienced more problems with crude, let-it-all-hang-out slugger Barrios than more prudent opponents.

Nate Campbell

Joan Guzman

Style

Rangy boxer-puncher who enjoys mixing it up and has the punch to be successful doing so ... Inconsistency has been his major stumbling block ... Equally at home in the trenches as seeking openings from the outside ... Makes better use of his jab to set up powerpunches ... Determined finisher.

Campbell sends Alicea down and out in the third

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

Davis can't get past Guzman's jab

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Bouncing ball of energy who uses every inch of the ring to employ twisting, turning, pivoting style ... Likes opponents to come to him so he can counter ... Upper-body and head movement shine during exchanges ... Does not seem to try for kayo against top-shelf opposition.

The Questions

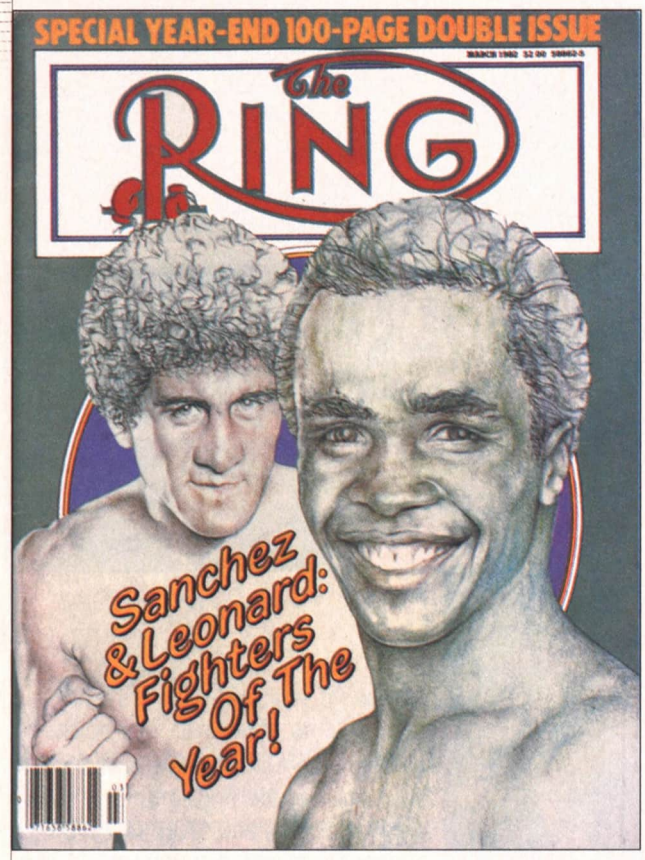
Can he handle Guzman's superior hand and foot speed? Did the grueling fight with Diaz take anything out of him? Can he take advantage of his five-inch edge in reach? Will his age catch up with him?

Can he handle Campbell's harder punches? Will the move up in weight be a disadvantage against a naturally larger man? Does he have enough pop to hurt Campbell? Will he alienate the judges by showboating?

The Outcome

Campbell's best bet is to attempt to lure Guzman into a brawl as soon as possible, but if he is unable to do so, his title reign could be over in his first defense. Look for Guzman's speed and shifty defense to carry him to a reasonably close decision.

March 1982



COVER STORY: "Sanchez & Leonard: Fighters Of The Year" is the cover headline for THE RING's annual awards issue, which features an outstanding illustration of both fighters by Mark Anderson. It was just the third time since 1928, when the magazine launched the award, that two fighters (Ray Leonard and Salvador Sanchez) shared the honor. Previously, Tony Canzoneri and Barney Ross (1934), and Muhammad Ali and Carlos Monzon (1972) had been co-winners.

WBC featherweight titleholder Sanchez had won four bouts in '81, defeating Wilfredo Gomez (KO 8), Pat Cowdell (W 15), Robert Castanon (KO 10), and Nicky Perez (W 10). World welterweight champion Leonard had tallied a trio of kayos: Thomas Hearns (KO 14), Ayub Kalule (KO 9), and Larry Bonds (KO 10).

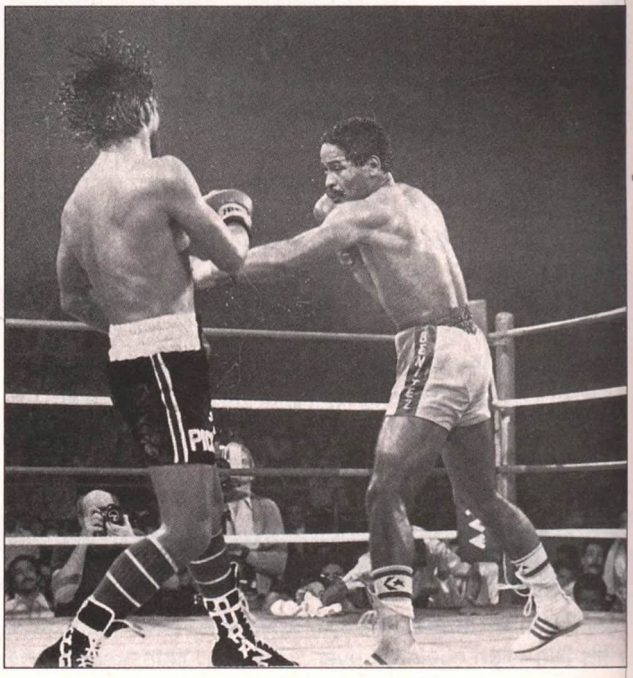
Other awards included Fight of the Year (Leonard-Hearns), Round of the Year (William "Caveman" Lee-John LoCicero, fifth round), and Upset of he Year (Roger Stafford W 10 Pipino Cuevas).

World Champions

(for period ended February 1, 1982)
Heavyweight: Larry Holmes
Light Heavyweight: Dwight Braxton
Middleweight: Marvin Hagler
Junior Middleweight: Ray Leonard
Welterweight: Ray Leonard
Junior Welterweight: Aaron Pryor
Lightweight: Alexis Arguello
Junior Lightweight: Samuel Serrano
Featherweight: Salvador Sanchez
Junior Featherweight: Wilfredo Gomez
Bantamweight: Jeff Chandler
Flyweight: Antonio Avelar

"The Night Benitez Wrote 'No Mas' To Duran's Career" is Bert Sugar's take on Wilfred Benitez' 15-round decision over Roberto Duran to retain the WBC super welterweight title in what was Duran's third fight since his disgraceful capitulation to Leonard in their November 1980 rematch.

"As the rounds began to fly by like signs on the freeway leading out of Vegas and the sands in Duran's hourglass began to wind down to a precious few, he tried mightily to stage a late rally, bullying Benitez into the ropes," wrote Sugar. "But especially in the 15th, Benitez used the opportunity to put



Benitez outboxes Duran to retain junior middle belt

on a masterful exhibition of counterpunching, choreographing his moves to stay out of Duran's—and harm's—way."

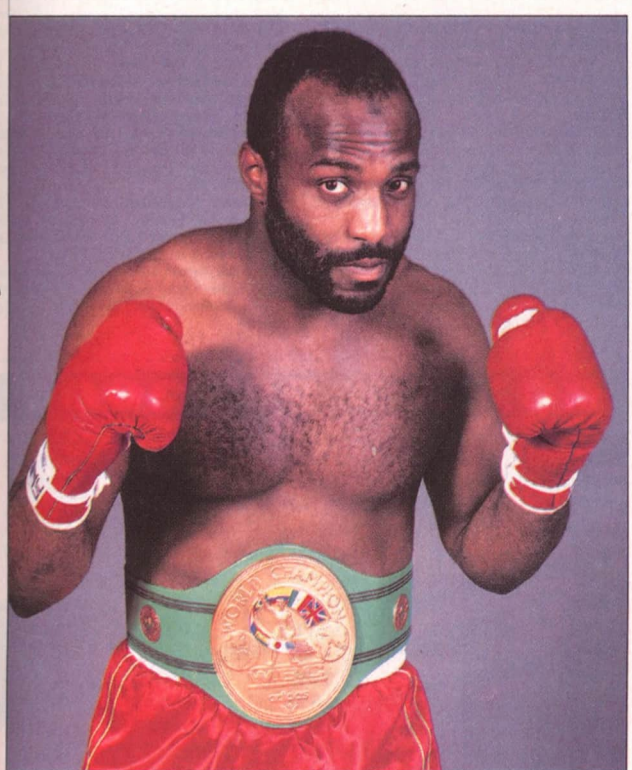
"Boxing's Powers-That-Be" by Mike Marley divides boxing people into two groups, the "in basket" and the "out basket." Although most of those in the out basket stayed there (Harold Rossfield Smith, the criminal mastermind behind the MAPS scandal, for example), it's fun to note how some of those residing in the in basket later fell from grace, including then-New Jersey commissioner Bob Lee, who ended up in prison due to his illegal activities as president of the IBF.

"Dwight Braxton And ESPN: TV Boxing's Version Of *The Dating Game*" by Nigel Collins traces both Braxton's journey from the penitentiary to the WBC light heavyweight title and the emergence of ESPN as a powerful boxing entity.

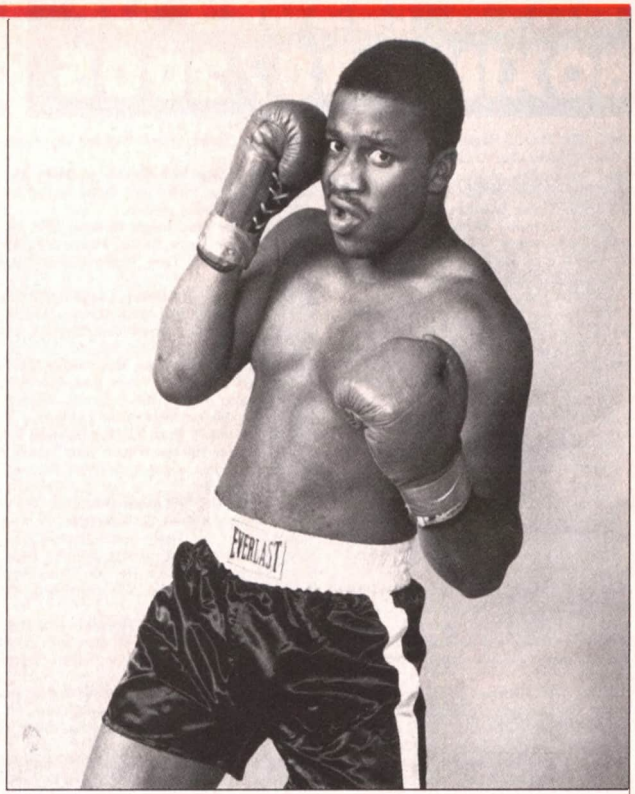
"Braxton's rise to the title in just 18 professional fights is a tribute not just to him, but to ESPN's boxing program," wrote Collins. "Dwight used his ESPN belt—the first boxing championship created exclusively by, and for, television—as a springboard to other belts—most notably THE RING/VO Championship belt. But just as importantly, his triumph lent credibility to their 'TV title.'"

Braxton would change his name to Dwight Muhammad Qawi shortly after the article was published.

"Last Round: Red Smith" is Dave Anderson's tribute to the recently departed Smith, dean of American sportswriters: "Red Smith was, quite simply, the best sportswriter. With the emphasis on writer. If he has chosen to write



Braxton/Qawi as he looked as light heavy champ



The young, slim version of Witherspoon

novels or plays, he would have been a great writer too. But he preferred to write about sports—better than anyone else ever has. Of all those who have written sports for a living, nobody else had his command of the language, the turn of a phrase, the subtlety of the skewer as he did. And nobody enjoyed it more."

"Fight Of The Month" is a now-forgotten classic between defending WBC super featherweight titleholder Rolando Navarrete, of the Philippines, and South Korean challenger Chung-Il Choi, held in front of 30,000 fans at Manila's Rizal Memorial Stadium. "The fight was ballyhooed as the 'Duel At The Park,' but it might as well have been called the second 'Thrilla In Manila,'" wrote Joe Koizumi.

The undefeated Choi, whose 13 previous victories included eight Filipinos, almost made it nine when he floored Navarrete in the fifth round. But the local hero beat the count and finally prevailed via 11th-round knockout in a savage war.

Also of interest was the fact that the Philippine government waved all taxes on the fighters' purses, which meant Navarrete took home $80,000 and Choi $40,000.

"Rings Around The World" features fight reports from various correspondents from a variety of nations. Many fighters who would go on to win major titles are found in this section, some already main-event fights, and others still in the preliminary ranks. Among those in this issue are Edwin Rosario and Daniel Zaragoza (now both enshrined in the International Boxing Hall of Fame), Tim Witherspoon, Hector Camacho, Juan LaPorte, Pinklon Thomas, Joes Luis Ramirez, Jorge Vaca, and Dennis Andres. ■

BACK ISSUES OF BOXING 88/2005

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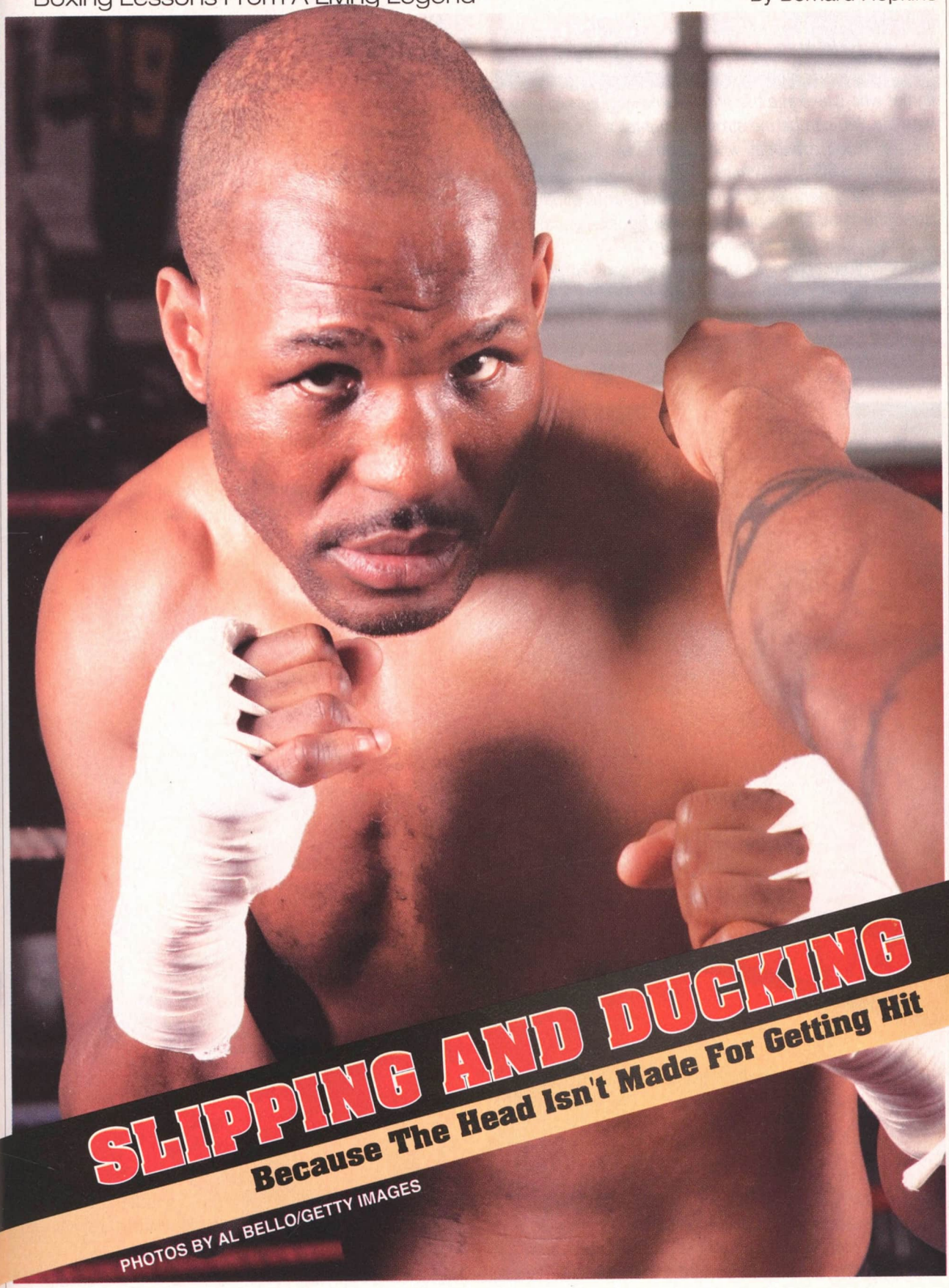
Perfect Execution

Boxing Lessons From A Living Legend

By Bernard Hopkins



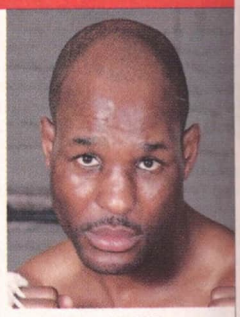
SLIPPING AND DUCKING

Because The Head Isn't Made For Getting Hit

PHOTOS BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

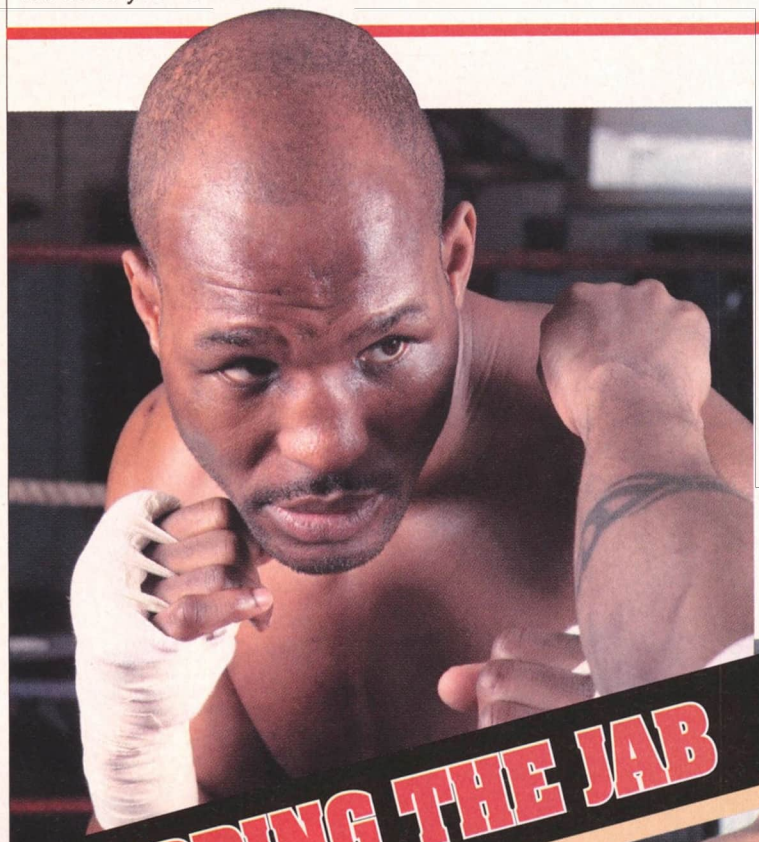
Everybody likes to see fighters get in there and mix it up, but the way to last in this business is to hit and not get hit. That's the name of the game. That's the science of it. I want to hit you and not get hit in return. Offense is only half the game. Defense is the other half. Any fighter who walks into the ring not knowing how to play defense as well as offense won't make it very far. You can be the strongest fighter around and knock out a lot of guys, but sooner or later there's going to be a guy who can take what you give him and hit you back. You've got to be able to make him miss sometimes. That's why you have to know how to slip and duck punches.

The thing people don't remember about slipping and ducking is they're offensive moves too. When you slip a punch, you're not just getting out of the way—you're getting in position to punch. You want to move toward the punch, so it goes by you. When you do that, you're closer to your opponent and he's exposed. When you duck a punch, you're getting in position to come up with something. It's about getting into position to punch. Here, Danny Davis helps me show you how it's done.



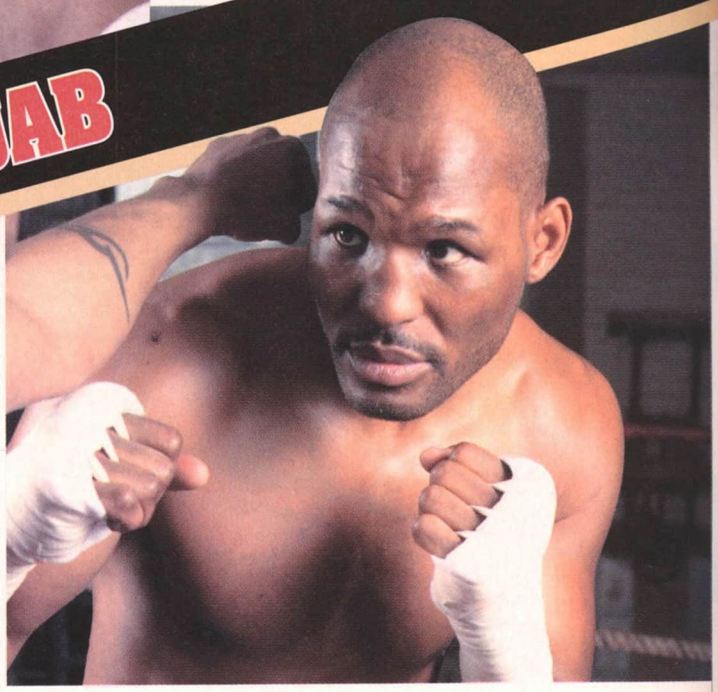
BERNARD HOPKINS *Is the former middleweight and light heavyweight champion of the world.*

(All photos taken at Andy Carr's Gym in Upper Darby, PA)



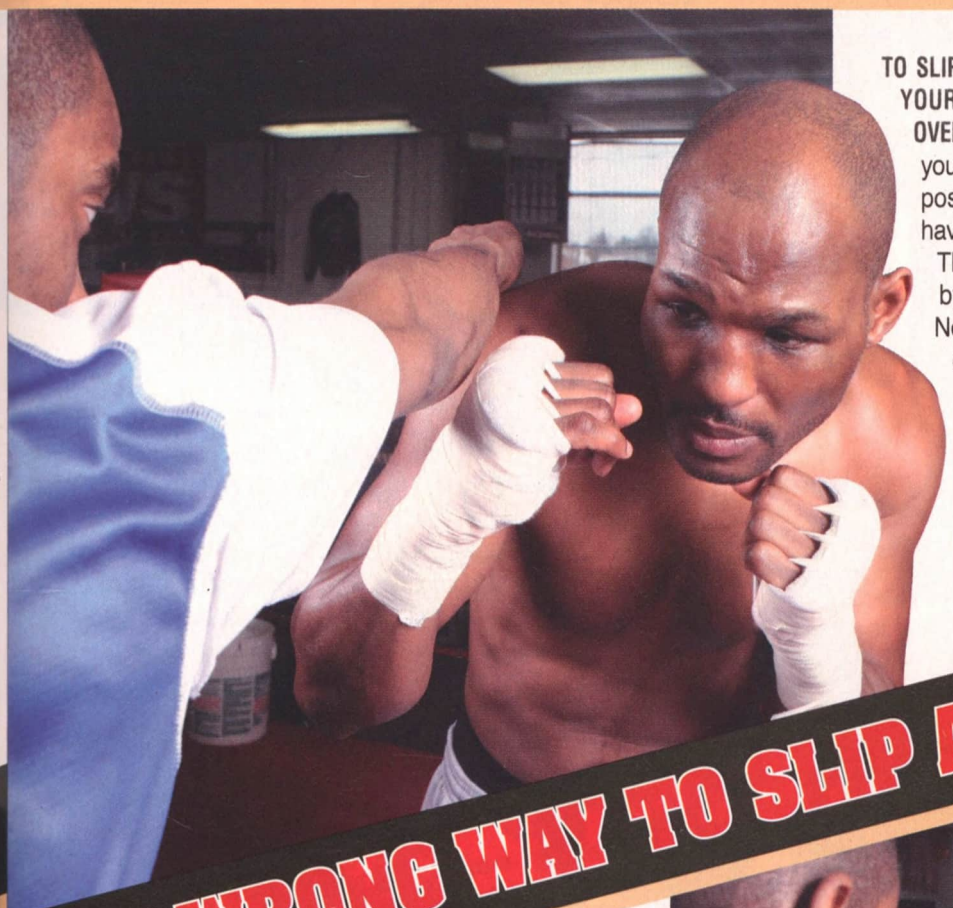
SLIPPING THE JAB

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT SLIPPING THE JAB IS TO MAKE IT MISS, BUT ALSO TO GET INSIDE. When a guy throws the jab, he's open to get hit with a bodypunch or a counter jab, so if you can slip the jab successfully, it can put you in a great position to counter. You can slip the jab by moving your head to the left or the right of the punch. Here, I'm slipping to the right. When you do it, bend forward slightly at the waist and the knees. As always, your eyes stay on your opponent at all times, and watch your balance.



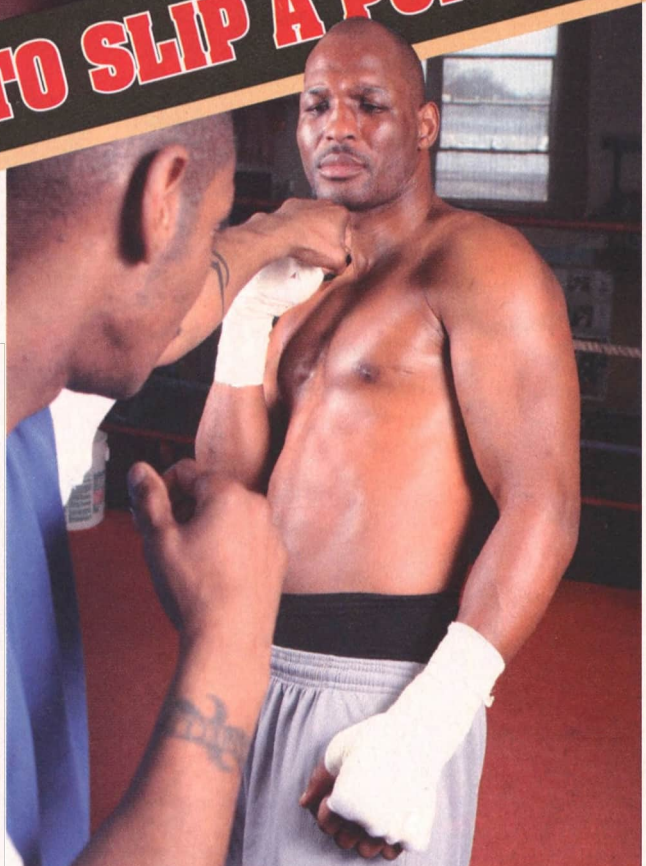
YOU CAN SLIP THE JAB TO THE LEFT TOO. This gives you a different route to counter. Use this one sparingly. If you do it too often, your opponent will feint with the jab and come with the right hand, and you'll be right in line to catch it.

SLIPPING THE RIGHT HAND



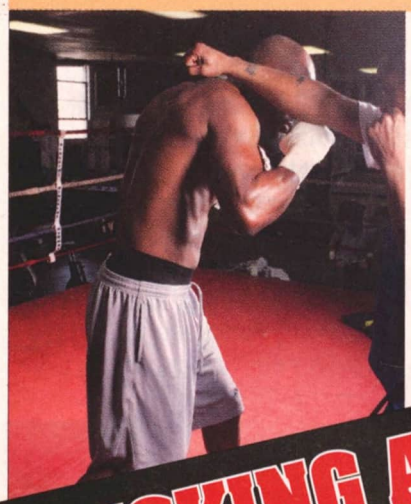
TO SLIP THE STRAIGHT RIGHT, BEND TO YOUR LEFT AND LET THE PUNCH GO OVER YOUR RIGHT SHOULDER. Again, you want to move into it so you're in position to counter, and you don't have to move your head that much. The punch doesn't have to miss by a foot, as long as it misses. Notice my hands are up and my eyes are on my opponent.

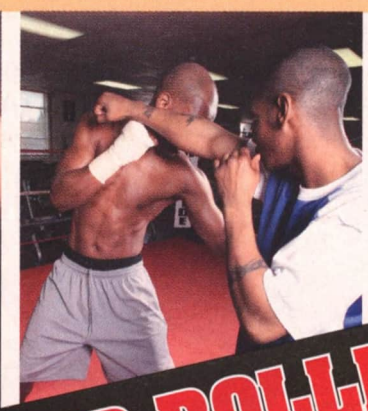
THE WRONG WAY TO SLIP A PUNCH



MUHAMMAD ALI AND A COUPLE OF OTHER GUYS WERE ABLE TO PULL IT OFF, but pulling straight back like this with your hands down is a sure way to get hit. When you first start out, you'll want to do this; it'll feel natural. Don't get into the habit.

SLIP AND GET INSIDE

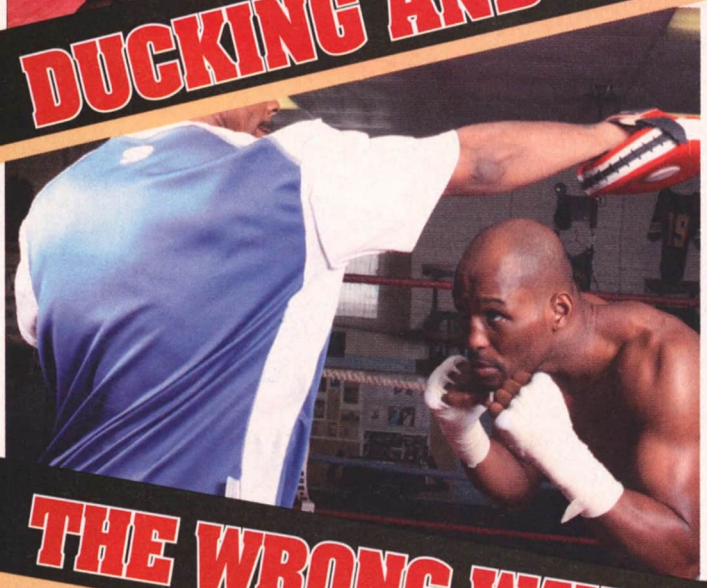


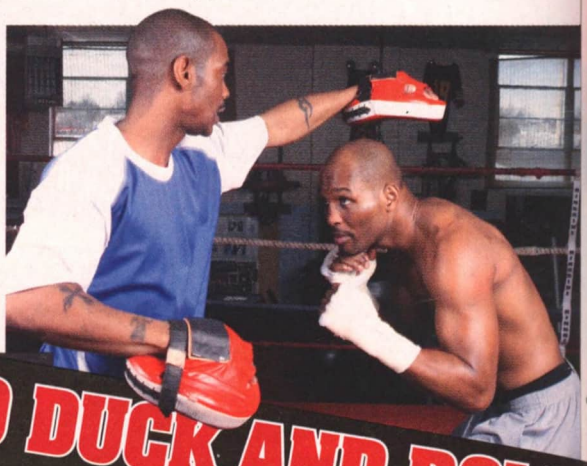


THIS IS WHAT SLIPPING A PUNCH IS ALL ABOUT. Here, you can see I slip a right hand by letting it go over my right shoulder. When I shift my weight to my left leg at the same time, my body is in perfect position to throw a left hook to the body—and my opponent is wide open for it.

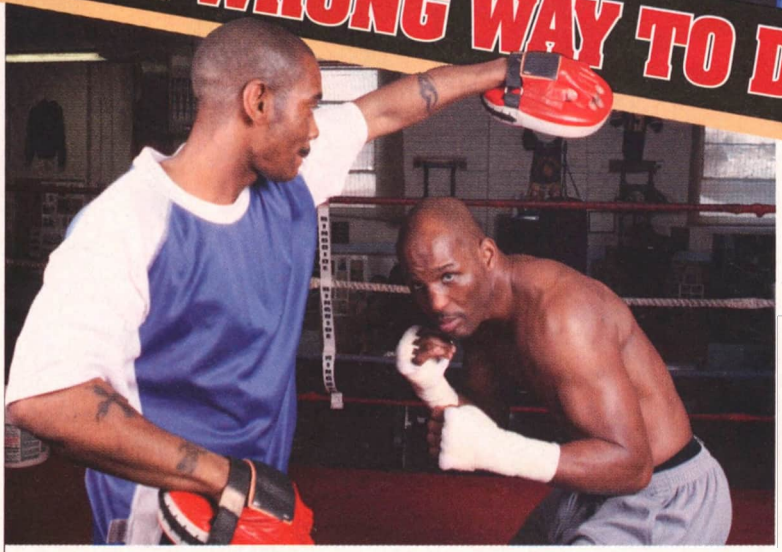
DUCKING AND ROLLING

FOR WIDE PUNCHES, YOU DUCK AND ROLL UNDER THEM RATHER THAN SLIPPING THEM. The important things to remember: Keep your eyes on your opponent; do not look at the floor. If you do, you lose track of what your opponent is doing and you can't afford to do that, ever. Also, bend at the waist *and* at the legs—not just at the waist. Your head should not be farther out than your front foot. If it is, you'll be off-balance and vulnerable to uppercuts.





THE WRONG WAY TO DUCK AND ROLL



YOU DON'T HAVE TO GET ALL THE WAY DOWN TO DUCK, JUST FAR ENOUGH SO THAT THE PUNCH GOES OVER YOUR HEAD. Also, my left hand is down, which means my opponent can very easily hit me with a right hand, and then follow that up with other punches. ■

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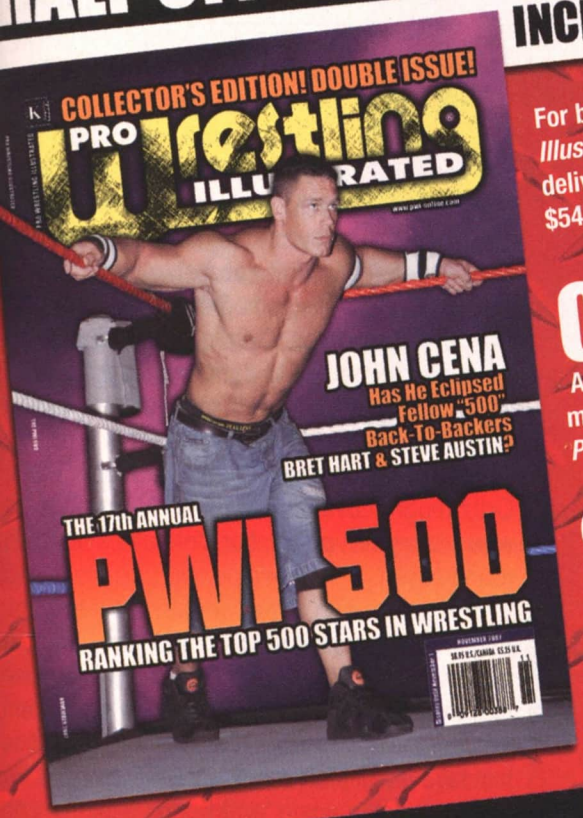

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A0208T

By Margaret Goodman, M.D.

A Barely Noticed Death

Boxing repeatedly conceals its dirty laundry. Therefore, it was no surprise that only a handful of press reports surfaced when 30-year-old junior welterweight Rafael Ortiz died March 19, 11 days after his sixth-round TKO loss to Michael Lucero at the Silver Reef Casino in Ferndale, Washington.

Ortiz began boxing in his teens, turning pro at 23. He was a gym rat, constantly training at Victory Gym in Albany, Oregon, with his longtime trainer, Jesse Ramos. Ortiz' 14-14-2 (13) record wasn't very glossy, but he always gave everything he had, and when victorious, it was typically by knockout. He was never out of shape between fights and was frequently seen running in his hometown of Lebanon.

According to Wally Jorgensen, Ortiz' manager throughout his professional career, he would fight anybody. "He was brave, a clean-living kid, and always in tremendous physical condition," said Jorgensen.

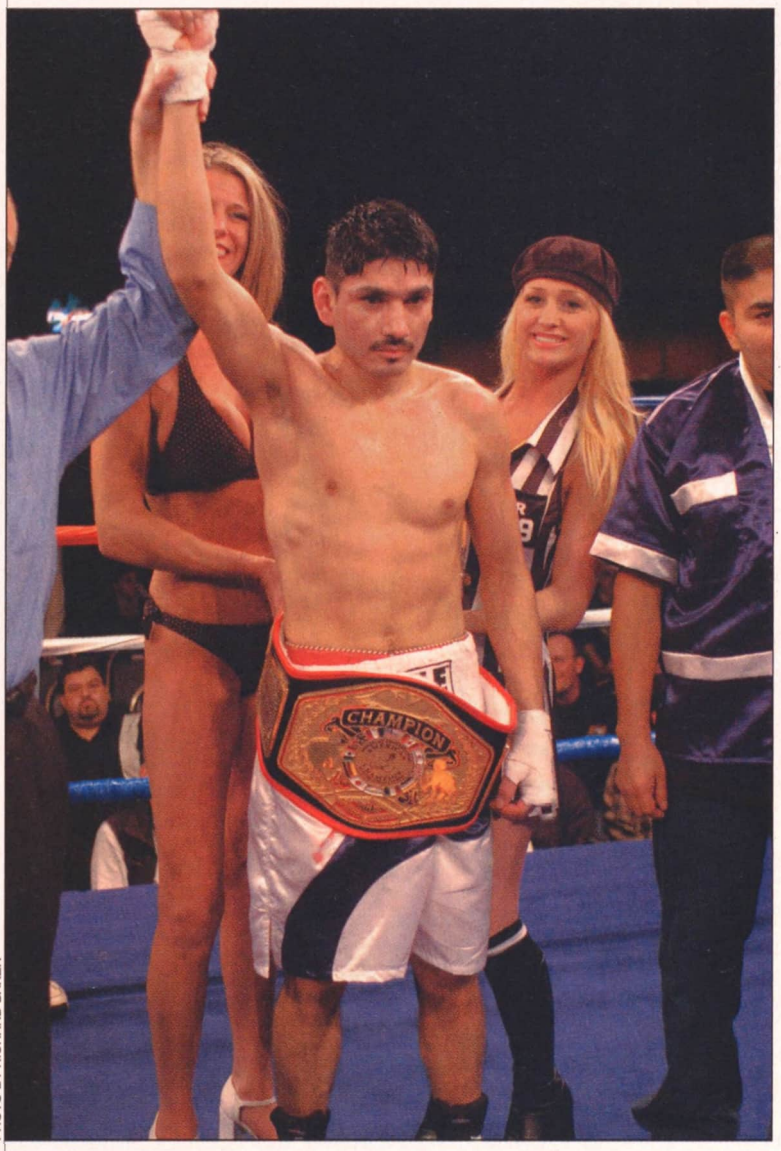


PHOTO BY RICHARD BAKER

Ortiz' arm is raised in victory

In his second-to-last fight, January 5, 2008, Ortiz fought Lovemore Ndou in Atlantic City. It was a competitive fight, but Ortiz was stopped in round seven.

"He got hit with a liver shot, not a headshot, and was dropped," said Jorgensen. "He just couldn't get up. It was the only time I had seen him hurt in a fight. When he came back from Atlantic City, he was sick with the flu. We made him take a complete month off from the gym. He started training again, and I don't think he said how bad he felt."

Mercedes Nunez, a close friend and boxer, also trained by Ramos, recalled that Ortiz wasn't right following his return from New Jersey. "He was tired and out of breath," said Nunez.

Trudi Touchette administrates the Washington State Department of Licensing. In addition to overseeing athletics, the office supervises cosmetologists, barbers, and manicurists.

"Several years ago, our governor decommissioned the commission," noted Touchette. "We have over 30 programs, and we are responsible for scheduling, approving matches, and assigning officials."

Washington has three licensed physicians, one per fight, and holds one to two cards a month. Fighters must submit a yearly physical and undergo a separate prefight (typically an hour before the card begins) and postfight exam.

According to Washington regulation WAC 36-12-310, the event physician shall examine the boxers and referees and provide a written report to the inspector disclosing the exam results and recommendations. It also specifies that, "Medical equipment to be utilized by an event physician for

the prefight and postfight examinations of boxers and referees shall consist of, but not limited to, a blood pressure cuff, otoscope, ophthalmoscope, penlight, reflex hammer, stethoscope, thermometer, and tongue depressor."

An examination of this type could be sufficient, but there was one glaring problem on March 8 when Ortiz fought his last fight: Ring physician Dr. Antoine Johnson was not properly equipped.

Dr. Johnson, contacted by THE RING, declined to comment, but Nunez, who fought on the same card as Ortiz noted, "Rafael had a fever before the fight, but we didn't have a physical. The doc didn't have equipment."

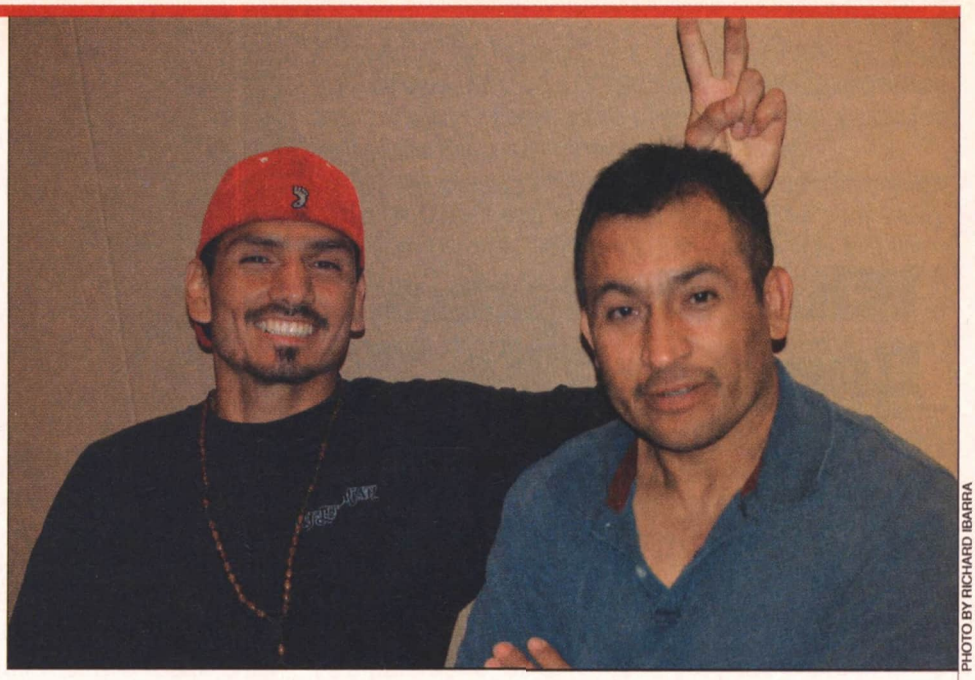


PHOTO BY RICHARD IBARRA

Ortiz and trainer Jesse Ramos share a fun moment

When asked to confirm this, Touchette responded, "The doctor did not have equipment."

Barry Druxman, longtime Washington official and president of IPRO (International Professional Ring Officials) was assigned to judge that night. He had great concerns about insufficient medical evaluations.

"I went in the back," said Druxman. "I saw the doctor simply feel the fighter's hands, look in his eyes and say, 'How do you feel?' That was it!"

Druxman promptly advised state officials that the ring physician should borrow the attending ambulance crew's equipment, but his plea fell on deaf ears.

Touchette said that soon after that night, the state purchased two complete sets of medical equipment to be at every fight card.

From the start of the scheduled eight-round bout, it was clear there was something wrong with Ortiz.

Seattle fighter manager Sam Ditusa knew Ortiz' career well and was seated close to his corner during the bout. "Once the fight started, I noted after the first round there was something wrong," said Ditusa. "During the second round, I asked Wally 'What's wrong with him?' He was confounded. [Ortiz] couldn't put his punches together."

At the end of round six, Jorgensen said to Ortiz, "What the hell is the matter with you?' He said, 'I can't breathe.' I said, 'I am stopping this fight.' At the end, the doctor came and checked him. Rafael had a cut, but the doctor didn't have his equipment, so he sent him to the hospital. We were told we could wait as long as 24 hours to get the cut sewn, so we went to dinner first."

Halfway through the meal, Ortiz complained he wasn't feeling well and began to shiver. At the hospital, he had a high fever. They conducted an evaluation, sutured his laceration, reduced his temperature, and sent him home. He continued to feel poorly. On March 12, he was admitted to Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Corvallis, and later transferred to Oregon Health Services University in Portland. The details are scant, but Ortiz apparently died from a failing heart as a result of the flu.

Influenza can kill at any age, especially if it produces a viral myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle). In fact, 20 percent of sudden death in young adults is due to myocarditis. Symptoms include severe fatigue, shortness of breath, chest pain, joint pain, fever, and diarrhea.

But could Ortiz have survived?

A thorough prefight exam using a blood pressure cuff, stethoscope, and thermometer might have helped diagnose viral myocarditis, but the clearest indicator would be a boxer who just can't compete due to extreme fatigue and shortness of breath.

Whether or not an appropriate exam was conducted before or following the bout, Ortiz did go to the hospital that night and was sent home with a life-threatening condition.

No one punch or any one thing kills a boxer. It is a confluence of factors that often resemble being trapped in the Bermuda Triangle. It appears that everyone and everything failed Rafael: He did not recognize the serious repercussions of his flu for many weeks, and when a prefight or postfight medical exam could have been a red flag, it was not done. The initial hospital visit could have saved the day, but it did not, and by the time he was hospitalized, it was too late.

Boxing didn't kill Rafael Ortiz. It was his unfailing courage and inadequate supervision by many.

Readers who would like to help Ortiz' family (wife, Adelina, and children, Marco, age 9, and Anali, age 7) can make a tax-deductible contribution to: Friends of IPRO, 2440 140th Avenue NE #47, Bellevue, Washington, 98005 (please put "Ortiz fund" on the check). ■

By Jim Bagg

What Happens In Vegas ... Boggles The Mind

During one of the Baggmeister's recent afternoon catnaps (and no, he wasn't behind the wheel during this one, thank you very much), he slipped into a dream about boxing. There was the Baggendorfer, ringside in Vegas for a heavyweight championship fight, and some faces he hadn't seen in a while cruised by: Marc Ratner, Mills Lane, Mitch Halpern, Margaret Goodman, Flip Homansky. Ah, Vegas boxing. The strongest commission, the best refs, the most capable doctors.

It was a wonderful dream—the best His Baggyness has had in a while that didn't feature Jane Fonda in her *Barbarella* get-up. Too bad that when the Baggabond opened his eyes, he awoke to a world in which Nevada boxing officials are as worthy of ridicule as those you see in Oklahoma or Tennessee (or WWE for that matter). And the card at Mandalay Bay on June 28, headlined by Manny Pacquiao's exquisite performance against David Diaz, was a perfectly imperfect example of just how far Vegas boxing has fallen.

You wanted terrible refereeing? You got it. You wanted inexplicable judging? You got it. You wanted a bumbling commissioner? You got it. You wanted a fighter lying in a

PHOTO BY HARY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

Cortez totally screwed up Lorenzo-Soto

PHOTO BY HARY HOWGLETTY IMAGES

Hey, doc, I could use a little help over here

pool of his own blood while being offered no medical help whatsoever? You got it.

Without a doubt, the worst offender was Joe Cortez, who was the third man in the ring for the Humberto Soto-Francisco Lorenzo junior lightweight fight. You know that saying, "May the best man win"? Write that down on a piece of toilet paper, then wipe and flush. Cortez saw to it that the fighter who proved himself utterly dominant went home with a loss on his record. Way to defeat the whole purpose of athletic competition, Joe.

After veteran Lorenzo gave a commendable effort for the first couple of rounds, the superior Soto started dishing out a beating in the third, and finished dishing out the beating in round four. He busted Lorenzo's nose and knocked him down, Lorenzo valiantly got up, Soto battered him some more, and Cortez jumped in to stop the fight, but then changed his mind, ultimately just interrupting Soto's attack. It didn't slow the Mexican down, however. He bashed Lorenzo a few more times, opened up a sickening cut over his eye, dropped him again, and before Cortez could jump in there to do what in this case would have been an *appropriate* punchus interruptus routine, Soto landed a grazing left hand with Lorenzo on one knee.

While Lorenzo's eye went into a Mount Vesuvius impersonation, it was Cortez' eyes, and his inability to use them in conjunction with his brain, that led the situation to get even messier than the blood-red canvas. Clearly, due to the cut, not to mention the pounding he was taking, Lorenzo was unable to continue. But after a six-minute powwow with Nevada Athletic Commission Executive Director Keith Kizer, Cortez came to the conclusion that the grazing left hand after the knockdown was the biggest incapacitating factor. So Cortez disqualified Soto and raised Lorenzo's arm. If boxing has ever known a less deserving winner, the Baggasaurus can't remember him.

Two things happened during the meeting of the minds between Cortez and Kizer that stand out as particularly appalling. For one, Cortez spent the entire time intentionally covering the microphone attached to his shirt. You can't get any more suspicious than that. Laurence Cole had to be loving it, though, as he immediately dropped a notch in the shady ref ratings.

And second, what the hell was up with Lorenzo, bleeding like he'd been shot, getting no medical attention? Cortez even concluded that he was concussed from the grazing late punch (which the Baggtective ain't quite buying), which would be another fine reason to have a doctor lend a hand. No matter what, the fight was being stopped and it was just a matter of Cortez deciding what the screw job—*er*, verdict—would be. There was no reason not to treat Lorenzo. No reason, that is, other than incompetence reigning in Nevada.

Back to Cortez: Probably, it's time for Peanut Head to retire. But at the very least, it's time for him to retire his catchphrase, "I'm fair, but I'm firm." You couldn't find a less "fair" result than what happened to Soto. So here are a few replacement catchphrases the Baggosphere recommends:

"I'm obtuse, but I'm obstinate."

"I'm dim-witted, but I'm determined."

"I'm blind and I sat on my glasses in the locker room."

"Let your conscience be your guide."

(Oh wait, that's Jiminy Cricket's catchphrase. Sorry, the Baggareeno sometimes has trouble telling Jiminy and Joe apart.)

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

How did judge Davis give Santiago (left) only three rounds?

Sadly, the "work" of Cortez and co-conspirator Kizer wasn't the only disgrace of the night at Mandalay Bay. In the opening TV bout, a barnburner between featherweight titlist Steven Luevano and Mario Santiago, judge Harry Davis handed in one of those revolting scorecards that makes a mockery of what everybody else had just watched. Duane Ford, who rarely gets anything right, got it right with a 115-113 card for Santiago. Dave Moretti was perfectly within range with a 114-114 card. But even though Santiago dominated the middle rounds of the fight, winning no less than five of them, Davis had it 117-111 for Luevano, giving the challenger only three rounds. No matter how you look at it, there weren't nine rounds in which you could make a case for Luevano.

Now, Davis is from Canada, so he isn't really Nevada's embarrassment. But what happens in Vegas has to fall on Vegas, at least to a degree.

Certainly, the beating Diaz took against Pacquiao in the main event falls partially on Vegas. It was local ref Vic Drakulich who let the one-sided hammering go on longer than it needed to, in just the sort of fight where tragedies can sometimes happen. Pacquiao was landing at will with both hands round after round (note to Diaz: head movement is still legal). Quick knockouts rarely do lasting damage; prolonged massacres often do. This one should have been stopped by the middle of round eight, but Drakulich and Diaz' corner both dropped the ball. As a result, Diaz took an extra few minutes of pointless punches, including a knockout blow that made for enjoyable highlight-reel material for the fans, but made for a not-so-enjoyable face-plant for the recipient.

Is stopping a fight one round too late an egregious offense? It is when one fighter has no hope of winning and the other fighter has no hope of missing his noggin with any punches.

It was, all around, a crappy night for Las Vegas' boxing officials. It seems to Baggnum P.I. that it's time for a shake-up. We probably won't get Ratner or Docs Goodman and Homansky back, and we definitely won't be getting Halpern or Maximum Mills back. So maybe it's time for some new blood in Nevada.

Just as long as the new blood isn't Lorenzo's or Diaz'. We've seen more than enough of that.

What Do Two Wrongs Make?

The Baggalicious has to weigh in quickly (which is the best way to weigh in when you have a gut this expansive) on the WBC's decision after Lorenzo-Soto to ignore the result of this fight for one of their vacant titles and leave the title still vacant. So here goes: Jose Sulaiman is every bit the mental midget that Cortez and Kizer are. This is a dangerously stupid decision, and it's an extra special display of dumb-ass-ery because Sulaiman had plenty of time to think about it.

Yes, the result of the fight was unfair. But what kind of precedent does this set? If the WBC can ignore the official result here, why can't they just ignore judges' decisions that they disagree with (and let's face it, there are controversial decisions in boxing every week), or consider a fight a no-contest if they think the ref stopped it too early, or just do whatever they want with a result to help whichever fighter they feel like helping, which isn't exactly beyond the scope of what the alphabet boys are capable of?

PHOTO BY OMAR TORRE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Sulaiman shows off his opposable thumb

Just when you think things can't get any worse, Sulaiman opens up a new can of worms. (Which proves, to the Baggadoodledoo's great surprise, that Jose has at least evolved far enough to have opposable thumbs.)

Life Without Larry

HBO took plenty of heat for its perplexing decision not to use either Larry Merchant or Max Kellerman for the Pacquiao-Diaz broadcast, and you know when viewers really felt the impact? When Harold Lederman took half a fight to wake up to the fact that Santiago was winning rounds against Luevano, and there was nobody there to counter with a more logical unofficial scorecard, a Merchant trademark.

Lederman messed up a couple of late rounds in the opposite direction and ended up with a reasonable final scorecard of 114-114. But along the way, it would've been nice to have Larry there to slap some sense into him—literally or figuratively, depending on Merchant's mood.

The Monthly Mailbagg

Thank goodness for the Internet, which allows the Baggpipe to see dirty pictures without having to drive down to sketchy parts of town and which allows him to read adoring e-mails from his fans (whenever he takes a break from the dirty pictures). Here goes with one of this month's more coherent reader offerings:

Hello Baggmaster,

I wonder what would happen if Marvelous Marvin Hagler fought Bernard "The Executioner" Hopkins at 160 pounds if both were at the peak of their careers. In your opinion, who would win? Who was the better middleweight boxer?

Digno Camacho

Digno,

First off, sorry about the last name. You have a lot to live down.

On to the matter at hand: Why are readers so obsessed with El Baggiachi's opinions on cross-generational fantasy fights? Why does the mailbox fill up with questions about Hagler-Hopkins and not with questions about Kelly Pavlik vs. Arthur Abraham, a fascinating middleweight title fight that might actually happen?

Oh well, you asked, so the Baggnificent will answer. If you put the prime Hopkins (of about 2001) in against the Hagler most people remember (of 1985-'87), The Executioner would have an excellent chance. But that wasn't the prime Hagler. Hell, Marvelous' prime might even have come before he won the middleweight title in 1980. When he was in his mid-20s, Hagler could do everything Hopkins could never do, plus he could switch stances effortlessly and he had much more serious knockout power than B-Hop did.

This is a great matchup of modern fighters who appeal to us old-schoolers, and it's Hagler's fight to lose. The only catch would be if the fight was at the Spectrum in Philly in 1976, when Hagler had some trouble winning decisions. In that case, maybe Hopkins wins … then Hagler gets revenge in a rematch.

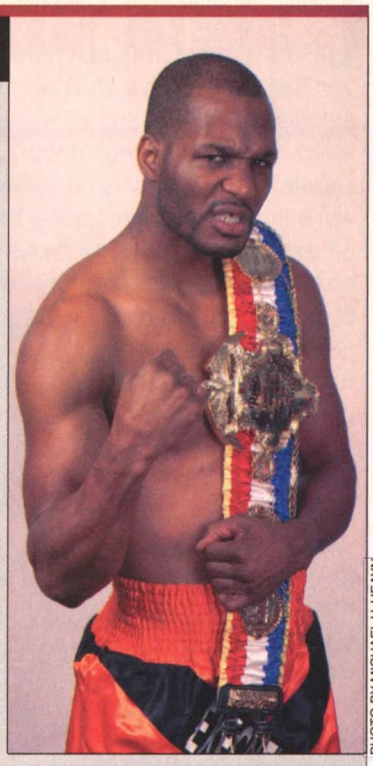


PHOTO BY MICHAEL V. HEAYN

B-Hop's response to Bagg's opinion

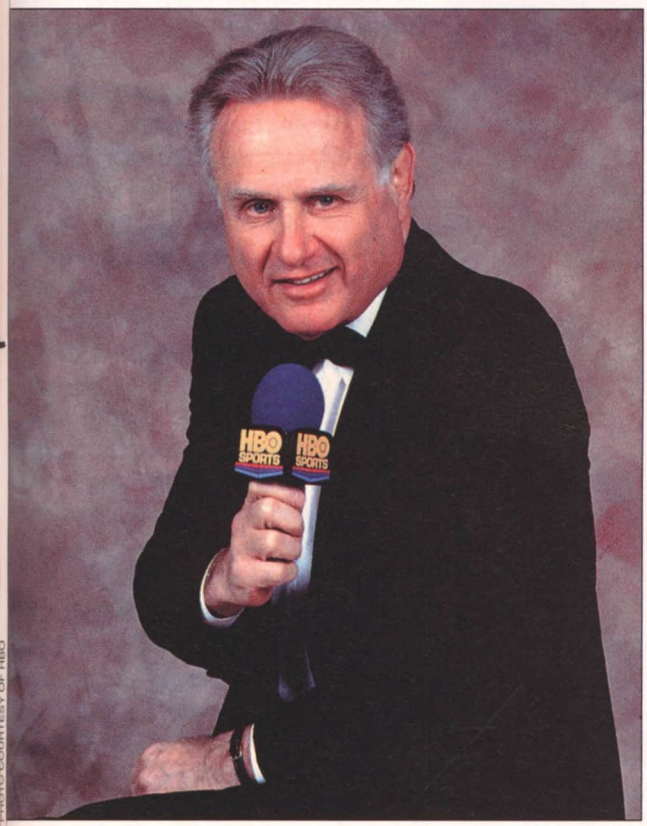


PHOTO COURTESY OF HBO

Where was Larry when we needed him?

Where's CompuBox When You Need 'Em?

As an old-school kind of guy, the Baggatorium never cared much for Punch Stats. But if CompuBox wants to make themselves useful, can we please get Swear Stats for all future David Diaz interviews? When it comes to F-bombs per minute, Diaz is boxing's sound-for-sound king.

In case you didn't get to see Jim Lampley's interview with Diaz after the Pacquiao fight, here are the Cliff's notes: Pacquiao is one really f___ing good f___er who's really f___ing fast.

Now you're all caught up.

And The Stingray Goes To …

Puerto Rican punching bag Celestino Rodriguez, who decided on May 23 that the bag was going to punch back. Lightweight Rodriguez brought a record of 5-10-2 into his setup fight against 5-0-1 prospect Francisco Cabrera, and Rodriguez' record is even worse than it sounds—he was 1-9-2 in his last dozen. But he shocked Cabrera, knocking him down three times in the first round to secure a win.

Interestingly, all six of Rodriguez' victories have come by knockout. Pampered prospects be forewarned: Rodriguez may not be able to float like a butterfly, but he can definitely sting like a ray. ■

Jim Bagg can be reached at Baggmeister@yahoo.com.

Come Out Writing

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, THE RING, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

Dream Match

For his final fight, Oscar De La Hoya should fight Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. at 154 pounds. Imagine the publicity this match would get, especially because Chavez Junior would be trying to avenge his father's two losses to De La Hoya.

EDWARD ESPOSITO
Orlando, FL

Shortchanging Pac-Man

Manny Pacquiao's knockout of David Diaz gives him a world title in a fifth weight class. How could HBO and other members of the media not recognize Manny's first victory over Marco Antonio Barrera as a title fight? THE RING belt is the most prestigious and the most difficult championship belt to win. Anybody who doesn't count his RING featherweight title doesn't know boxing!

I hope THE RING acknowledges Pacquiao as a *five*-division titleholder in its article covering the Diaz fight. He definitely earned and deserves the acknowledgement.

VICTOR RIVERO
vicrivero22@yahoo.com

Editor's note: Sadly, much of the mainstream media, including some of the folks at HBO, are guilty of not knowing the facts or simply ignoring them. Mr. Rivero, of course, is 100 percent correct—Pacquiao has won either world championships or alphabet titles in five different weight divisions: WBC flyweight title (1998), IBF junior featherweight title (2001), THE RING world featherweight championship (2003), THE RING world junior lightweight championship (2008), and WBC lightweight title (2008).

PHOTO BY HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

Manny Pacquiao wings a left at David Diaz en route to a ninth-round knockout and the WBC lightweight title. Reader Victor Rivero writes to complain about the way HBO and some of the media failed to recognize THE RING featherweight championship Pac-Man won by stopping Marco Antonio Barrera in 2003.

Cover Worthy

I just want to say that I am happy that Antonio Margarito is on the cover of the September 2008 issue of THE RING. I am a Puerto Rican and my wife is Mexican, so we love to see Puerto Rico vs. Mexico matchups such as Miguel Cotto-Margarito. Of course, I will be rooting for Cotto, but I respect Margarito a lot. He is one of those fighters that fought his way to the top and didn't have an easy road. More blue-collar fighters like Margarito should be on the cover because I, for one, am tired of seeing Mayweather and De La Hoya on the cover when they don't fight as hard as Cotto or Margarito.

ALBERT GUTIERREZ
albertgutierrez24@yahoo.com

Oscar And Immigration

I just finished reading Oscar De La Hoya's autobiography, *American Son*, and while it's not as compelling as Tim Kawakami's excellent 2000 biography of De La Hoya, I commend Oscar for dedicating a chapter to the immigration problem in the U.S. He could have chosen to avoid the issue and thereby avoid the controversy that always arises when celebrities use their platforms to address political issues. But Oscar obviously recognized the importance of speaking out for Mexicans trying to earn a decent living in America, since their situation parallels that of his parents, and by extension, his identity as a Mexican-American.

AARON S. BAYLEY
Toronto, ON

Mayweather Musings

In the wake of Floyd Mayweather's retirement, boxing fans around the world are piling on the criticism and accusations. They argue that Mayweather is ducking Miguel Cotto and is not the greatest of all-time. I agree that he may not be the greatest of all-time, but he is the best of this decade. So let's say he did fight Cotto and beat him, as I believe he would, and then retired. People would find something new to complain about. They would say that he was ducking Paul Williams, Shane Mosley, Joshua Clottey, Andre Berto, or some other fighter. At the end of the day, Mayweather is a great fighter who won belts in five different weight divisions.

I say he's earned the right to retire, and if he does return to boxing, will still dominate the competition. Enjoy retirement, Floyd, and if you come back, demolish the welterweight division and silence all of the critics!

MATT CHICK
Dover, DE

I have to think Floyd Mayweather has some serious self-esteem problems. Otherwise, why does he keep reminding the media how great he is and how not even Ali, Robinson, and Louis measure up to him? He even begrudges recognition of Manny Pacquaio as the new pound-for-pound king saying, "I'm so far ahead of those bums, I couldn't even tell you." Sounds like sour grapes to me. All I can say is Floyd the man is no match for Floyd the boxing master.

PATRICK TEE
Westmount, QC

Not Ready For Pac-Man

Don't you think it's a bit cheeky of Amir Khan to have expressed his wish to fight Manny Pacquiao? Especially when he's getting knocked to the canvas by boxing legends like Michael Gomez and Willie Limond. Come on, Amir, wake up and smell the coffee!

JAMES HAILWOOD
Bolton, UK

Firm But Fallible

When I saw Joe Cortez in the past, the first thing that would come to my mind was: "I'm firm, but I'm fair." Not anymore. Now every time that they announce that he will be refereeing a fight, I think how much he will interfere with the outcome. He was always a good referee in my mind until a few Julio Cesar Chavez' fights where he simply interfered too much and got on my nerves. It obviously has nothing to do with race, since British fans were disappointed with the way he broke up many clinches, without giving Ricky Hatton an opportunity to get his rhythm going against Floyd Mayweather.

But what really got me disappointed was Cortez' disqualification of Humberto Soto in his fight with Francisco Lorenzo. Cortez seemed so confused that he confused the fighters. By the time he stepped in, it seemed he was stopping it so Lorenzo would not receive any more punishment. It was, after all, a one-sided fight. But then the arguments began and I started to feel bad for Soto because I knew a bad decision was on its way. It has to be the worst call Cortez ever made.

MANUEL ROSALES
San Antonio, TX ■

PHOTO BY HARRY HOW/GETTY IMAGES

Believe it or not, Francisco Lorenzo, pictured bleeding and slumped against the ropes, was declared the winner via DQ by ref Joe Cortez in his bout with Humberto Soto due to an inconsequential blow that brushed the top of his head after he was knocked down. Reader Manuel Rosales was among the many readers who wrote to protest the call.

[Looking Ahead]

By Joseph Santoliquito

Mosley's Consolation: A Date With Mayorga

Shane Mosley can never reverse the stain of the two defeats he suffered to **Vernon Forrest**—the first two setbacks of Sugar Shane's career. But he may be able to obtain some solace by beating the man who twice beat "The Viper," when Mosley faces **Ricardo Mayorga**.

"El Matador" is Mosley's consolation for the cancelled **Zab Judah** fight in May, when a shattered shower door scuttled those plans. It is a bit of a comedown for a star such as Mosley, but at least he will stay active against an unpredictable opponent, which adds an element of intrigue.

The good news, as far as fans are concerned, is that the bout, originally scheduled for HBO Pay-Per-View, is now on regular HBO, September 27, at The Home Depot Center in Carson, California. The change also eliminates the viewing conflict that would have arisen if Mosley-Mayorga was held on the original date of October 18, the same night as Showtime's strong show featuring **Antonio Tarver-Chad Dawson** and the tape-delayed **Samuel Peter-Vitali Klitschko** fight.

Mosley, 44-5(37), rated number two at welterweight by THE RING, has a lot to gain with an emphatic victory over Mayorga, 29-6-1 (23). It could force an early-2009 showdown with the **Miguel Cotto-Antonio Margarito** winner for the welterweight world championship. If that doesn't happen, a Mosley victory would still create other big-fight opportunities.

Mosley *needs* a win. He's going to be 37 in October and the once lightning-quick reflexes aren't what they were. He has only so many wars left in him. He lost his last fight, a close, 12-round unanimous decision to Cotto, in November '07. Still, Sugar Shane may have found the perfect opponent in Mayorga, who is crude and exciting, but easy to hit.

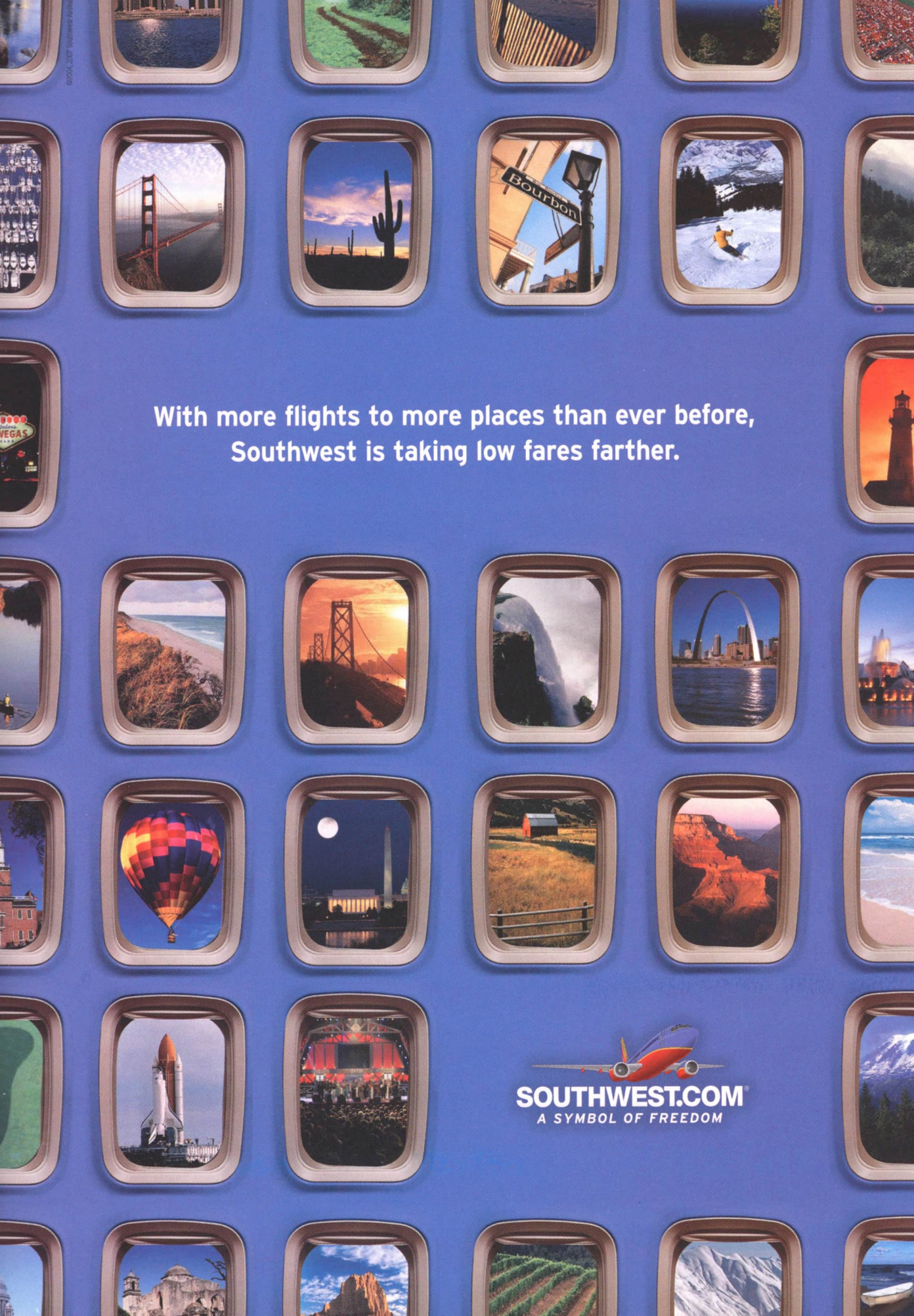
Mayorga is also desperate for a victory against a front-line foe. El Matador is 3-3 over his last six fights, though those losses came against top opposition in **Oscar De La Hoya**, **Felix Trinidad**, and **Cory Spinks**. Mayorga is coming off a majority decision victory in November 2007 over a shot **Fernando Vargas**, who was stopped in consecutive fights by Mosley in '06.

The one thing Mayorga may have in his favor is that he's facing a somewhat faded version of Mosley, a version that takes more punches than he did a few years ago. And, of course, there is the glaring psychological edge: Mayorga's two victories over Forrest. That's something Mayorga will assuredly remind everyone of during the prefight buildup, of course sandwiched in between snipes at Mosley's wife, **Jin**—a Mayorga hype trademark.

Listen Up

Yutaka Niida, THE RING's number-one rated strawweight, will defend the WBA title against undefeated **Roman Gonzalez**, on September 15, in Yokohama, Japan. This will be the eighth title defense for Niida, 23-1-3 (9), who has never fought off Japanese soil. Niida's only defeat came five years ago, against **Noel Arambulet**, in Niida's first bid for the WBA belt he currently holds. Gonzalez, 19-0 (17), has stopped five of his last seven opponents. But, like Niida, Gonzalez seems to favor home cooking. The Nicaraguan has fought only twice in his 19-fight career out of his native country. This will be Gonzalez' first opportunity at winning a title belt ... An intriguing junior lightweight matchup has been added to the **Juan Diaz-Michael Katsidis** undercard in Houston on September 6: **Jorge Barrios**, 47-3-1 (34), rated sixth at junior lightweight by THE RING, will meet 10th-rated **Rocky Juarez**, 27-4 (19). The fighters have contrasting styles, which will make this an enticing fight. Barrios is a winging, go-for-broke slugger, while Juarez is a careful strategist with a wicked left hook. Juarez needs this victory much more than Barrios, as the Mexican-American has lost three of his last five fights ... That same night, in Manchester, England, **Nicky Cook**, 28-1 (16), THE RING'S eighth-rated junior featherweight, will venture four pounds north to face **Alex Arthur**, 26-1 (19), rated sixth at 130 by THE RING, for the Arthur's WBO belt. Arthur has a record filled with fighters who possess nice records, but none with the experience of Cook. The last time Cook stepped up in class he was stopped in 11th round by **Steve Luevano**, losing the WBO featherweight belt in July '07. ■

Mayorga should be easier to handle for Mosley than Cotto was last November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